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WEEK BY JUNE 2000

\$5.95

LITTLE WHITE LIES

Truth & Movies

TRUTH



chapter one in which
we discuss the past,
present and future
of LULies



At

Movies don't exist in a vacuum, and nor does *LWLies*. After five years, 30 issues, hundreds of interviews and nearly a thousand reviews, the magazine has mutated and evolved. But amidst the growth and change, one thing has stayed the same: a simple commitment to Truth & Movies.



Little White

was conceived in a spirit of reckless optimism and deep frustration. As both movie lovers and magazine fans, we were frustrated by the failure of the media to speak to us in a way that felt honest and authentic. The mainstream was dominated by Hollywood's breathless hype, while the serious journals were locked in their academic ivory towers.

These magazines seemed impervious to the pace of change around them – the rise of the internet, the irrelevance of 'news', the impending arrival of digital platforms – and yet neither did they exploit the unique appeal of print. The old wisdom claimed that this is what the public wanted, but nobody had ever really put it to the test. We wanted to create a choice.

With no power comes no responsibility. How do you create a magazine from nothing, with nothing? You make your own rules. You recognise that movies shape the way we see the world. As Godard's biographer Richard Brody put it, everything is cinema, and if everything is cinema, everything is inspiration.


LWLies created a niche for itself, but its vision is inclusive and universal – it is a magazine for anybody who has ever been touched by cinema, who has witnessed (Godard again) truth at 24 frames-per-second.

Lies

That is the past and yet this is an issue dedicated to the future – including our own. In the last five years, new technology and changing patterns of consumption have asked fundamental questions of cinema and publishing. But we believe in both as passionately as ever.

This brave new world of online opinion, digital communities and ubiquitous celebrity represents an opportunity for niche publications, not the promise of their demise. While the mass market self-destructs in a race to the bottom line, people who treat their audiences, and themselves, with respect – who produce something beautiful, necessary and unique – will thrive.

We're embracing the future. In the coming months, you'll be able to download the *LW*Lies App and view the magazine on an iPad. You'll even see us join with brands to exploit new opportunities to connect with audiences on a larger scale, working to change people's expectations of what a film magazine can and should be.

But underpinning all of these activities is the same simple commitment that was hatched in the kitchen of a London flat five years ago. To develop a voice with something to say. To create something memorable. To be part of the solution. To be honest and unmerciful, especially with ourselves. 

30/30 Vision

The features, reviews and interviews that defined EW's first five years.

His *Anderson* is back on the radar after a four-year absence. But in *The Life Aquatic*, a big fish or a small fish?

Every generation of movie-lovers longs to witness a shift in power. A revolution that puts them in charge of the

boundaries of movie culture. It's easy, then, to demand for the throne and due of Wes Anderson, who, with *Blue in the Face*, has redefined

the cinematic technique, creating an alternative universe of aesthetics, psychology and ordinary people. Anderson has consistently plundered



"WITH ITS DYNAMIC EDITING, SURREALIST JOLTS AND SHATTERING PERFORMANCES, REMUEV FUSED THE STYLISTIC PYROTECHNICS OF DAVID FINCHER WITH THE CONCUSSIVE EMOTIONALITY OF PT ANDERSON FOR ONE ASTONISHING CINEMA EXPERIENCE."

Paul Thomas Anderson

by Dave Karger

Anderson's *The Life Aquatic* is a masterpiece of cinematic storytelling. It's a film that's both a love letter to the past and a commentary on the present. The film's visual style is a blend of the classic and the modern, creating a unique and memorable experience for the viewer.

Wes Anderson

by Dave Karger

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David Fincher

by Dave Karger

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The Life Aquatic
Matt Groening

"Every generation of movie-lovers longs to witness a shift in power." This is where it all started, and yes, we're really talking about ourselves

New Age Dawning
Various

An alternative canon, or man festo of sorts. These were the nine directors who we predicted would inspire us over the years to come

The Back Section
Various

The Back Section, repository of movie ephemera and ever-a source of mystery and wonder, takes shape under the *Sn City* issue's comic-book styling

Movie Love
George Romero

George Romero becomes the first of many to be asked what it is he loves about movies, starting a tradition that's still going strong



Confidence

Confidence, self-assurance and efficiency in communication
 All four selling experiences with confidence levels, as the experience in their role will most certainly
 experience deeper levels of confidence, there is a wide range of experience from high confidence
 levels.

[illegible]

This is grand stuff.

What's a grand slam? A grand slam is a baseball game in which a team scores four runs in each of the four innings. It is a rare feat, and the last grand slam was scored by the New York Yankees in 1956.

Although there are no standardized data collection techniques for assessing cost, some methods are in the experimental literature. For example, some studies attempt to determine the relative value of different attributes of a product by asking respondents to choose between two hypothetical products that differ in only one attribute. Another method is to ask respondents to rate the desirability of different attributes of a product on a scale of 1 to 5. The results of these studies can be used to estimate the relative importance of different attributes. For example, if a respondent rates the attribute of "low cost" as more important than the attribute of "high quality", then the relative importance of low cost is higher than that of high quality. This method can be used to estimate the relative importance of different attributes of a product, but it is not a direct measure of cost. The most common method for estimating cost is to ask respondents to report the amount they would be willing to pay for a product. This method is based on the assumption that respondents will report their true willingness to pay. However, respondents may not report their true willingness to pay for a variety of reasons. For example, respondents may not know their true willingness to pay, or they may not want to report their true willingness to pay. Therefore, the results of this method may be biased. Another method for estimating cost is to use a cost function. A cost function is a mathematical equation that relates the cost of a product to its attributes. For example, a cost function might be used to estimate the cost of a house based on its size, location, and age. The results of a cost function can be used to estimate the cost of a product, but they are only as good as the data used to estimate the function. Therefore, the results of a cost function may be biased if the data used to estimate the function are biased.

The authors' recommendations are partly also contradictory and can be considered taking 2 steps: would the respondents be working regularly with statistics and have access to the software for the use of statistics of different types (e.g., SPSS)? The first step is a questionnaire that helps respondents determine their level of access to tools. In fact, the more data are available, the more you get a good idea of the meaning and importance of a tool within the public sector. The second step is to identify a group of experts and specialists in the use of the tools that will help the respondents determine the importance of the tools and the importance of the public sector and improve the accuracy of the survey results by asking for the availability of

As I leave, the priest takes my hand again and reminds me that if I want him to help me in any way at all, to let him know. I thank him and promise that I will.



The Exorcist
Months Back

Forget talent interviews in plush hotels, we headed to a North London pub to meet the Woodoo priest accused of carrying out illegal abortions.

Duck and Cover
Sophia Dierker

Where else would you be reassured that methylphosphonodichloric acid is one chemical nerve agent that's unlikely to cause a zombie apocalypse?

Soldiers' Stories
Matti Doohan

Gone beyond the remit of a traditional movie mag, a Marine squad and Army officer reveal what it's like to serve on the frontline for the Jan headissue

1 MWL 2014
Art Attack
TODL edition

Our award-winning in-house design team began to flex its creative muscles with a series of illustrations inspired by pop-art style posters.



1997, Jan. 10 **Fun Brings Freedom** Victoria Klemmer

Our report from Pixar HQ questioned the world's favourite film studio. We carried the original image of John Lasseter looking like an 88 guard, though

1997, Jan. 10 **Everything is Illuminated** James Brumire

Beyond actors and directors, we've always celebrated the craftsmen of cinema—including this gathering of the industry's most celebrated cinematographers.

1997, Jan. 10 **Nothing About Us Without Us** Marti梭伦斯

Disability is one of the last on-screen taboos. In a controversial piece, we gave a voice to those most affected by it.

1997, Jan. 10 **Secret Cinema** Mark Cousins

With the political situation volatile and the national press belligerent, Mark Cousins delivered a thoughtful dispatch on the realities of life and cinema in Iran.

The Pros and Cons of Inmate Art

THE KROESTER TRUST IS USING ART TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AMONG BRITAIN'S PRISON POPULATION.
By Andrew Rossiter, Arts Editor



Photo: BBC/PA/PA Images

Art Therapy – The Kroester Trust is using art to make a difference among Britain's prison population.

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1997 June 12

Inmate Art

Andrea Kurland, Various

Maintaining a commitment to grassroots creativity, we showcased a series of works from The Kroester Trust's offenders' art programme

1997 June 12

Stunt Drafting

Various

£Waves' artists at their best – mingling film and illustration to create something unique, vibrant and beautiful, infused with a passion for film

1997 June 12

The Beast of the East

Somerset Maugham

The Gomorrah issue saw a local correspondent from the 'Stans delving into corruption and organised crime in this dangerous part of the world

1997 June 12

The Brothers Grim

James Krabbe

We debated long and hard, but if £Waves doesn't put a Dardenne brothers' film on the cover and follow up with a 4,000-word location interview, who else will?



EW.com Jan. 10
Jungle Fever
 Jonathan Croser

As they began to come our way, we asked big name directors the smart questions, resulting in stunning, revelatory interviews like this one with Steven Soderbergh.



EW.com Jan. 10
Cult Hero No. 01 & The Archive No. 01
 Jason Wood, Paul Farrington

The Back Section goes retrospective with The Archive and Cult Hero – eloquent studies of old games and past masters.



EW.com Jan. 10
Blood of the Dragon
 Pierre Haski

Eschewing vampire clichés for Jet Li's Right One In, a French journalist bears witness to a Chinese ADB crisis covered up by the government.

EW.com Jan. 26
Creative Brief
 TCO/London

A new era of interaction and ambition, the first Creative Brief invited our insanely talented readers to design their own Where The Wild Things Are cover.

EW.com Jan. 26
Spike Jonze double cover
 Geoff McFetridge

Geoff McFetridge's twin illustrations linked two separate magazines in different genres with a single cover image for the first time ever.

EW.com Jan. 26
The Godfather
 Matt Rochenke

After visiting Francis Ford Coppola in a local Paris bistro, an EW.com looks to the future, it does so with a clear connection to the authentic legends of cinema's storied past.

"THERE'S NO BETTER FILM-MAKER WORKING IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW"

NICK JAMES, SIGHT AND SOUND

"EQUAL PARTS TERRIFYING AND TENSE, PUNCHY AND AMBIGUOUS, DIRECT AND DISORIENTATING"



KEVIN HARTLY, TOTAL FILM

WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS JARVIS

A FILM BY CLAIRE DENIS (35 SHOTS OF RUM)

STARRING ISABELLE HUPPERT AND CHRISTOPHE LAMBERT

NICOLAS DUVAUCHELLE WILLIAM NADYLA MICHEL SUBOR ISAACH DE BANKOLÉ

WHITE MATERIAL

"SEARING AND BEAUTIFUL"



HUGH JACKMAN, THE TELEGRAPH

"SPELLBINDING"



DAVID JENKINS, TIME OUT

An Artificial Eye Release
artificial-eye.com

IN THE AFRICAN HEAT, ONE WOMAN STANDS ALONE

15

IN CINEMAS 2ND JULY

CURZON
Juba

CURZON
Chelsea

CURZON
Renoir

CURZON
Richmond

hmvCURZON
Wimbledon

vue
Islington

ODEON
Swiss Cottage

RITZY
Brixton

Picture
Palace
Greenwich

RIO
Eastbourne

Picture
Palace
Luton

Duke of York's
Theatre

WATERSHED
Theatre

TYNARDE
Theatre

CORNERHOUSE
ARTHOUSE CINEMA

Light
House

Light
House

Light
House

Light
House

Light
House

Light
House

Light
House


AND SELECTED CINEMAS NATIONWIDE

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chapter two in which
we introduce ourselves

We want to sing the love of danger,
the habit of energy and restlessness.

The essential elements of our poetry will
be courage, audacity and revolt.

We are on the promontory of the centuries.
What is the use of looking behind at the moment
when we must open the mysterious shutters of
the impossible?

Standing on the world's summit we launch
once again our insolent challenge to the stars.

The Futurist Manifesto



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THE CHURCH OF LONDON

Published by
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 Top Floor
 8-11 Basinghall Place
 London EC4A 3DB
 +44 (0) 20 72973875

Distributed by
COMAG Specialist
 Services Wrotham
 Tewkesbury Road, Wren Doreham
 Middlemore LE17 5GR
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Subscription enquiries
shop@thechurchoflondon.com

Cover illustration by **Russ Eggenstein**

The authors accepting liability for publications
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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF
THE HOST AND **MEMORIES OF MURDER**

"BY MILES THE
BEST THRILLER
I'VE SEEN
THIS YEAR.

RIVETING AND DARKLY FUNNY,
BONG JOON-HO IS A
BRILLIANT FILMMAKER."



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
OFFICIAL SELECTION



A FILM BY BONG JOON-HO

MOTHER

SHE'LL STOP AT NOTHING

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15
PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED

ble

OPENS IN CINEMAS AUGUST 20

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CREATIVE BRIEF



FUTURE MOVIE POSTER



Inspired by the forward-looking nature of the Future issue, our fifth Creative Brief invited the next generation of poster designers to show us the direction in which the theatrical good is heading.

Whether it's the adaptation of a book that hasn't been written, or the biopic of a life yet to be lived, these are the movie posters of our future-film dreams.

The winner, picked by the TCCLondon design team, is Thomas Lacey. According to the judges, his poster for the adaptation of Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*, a 700-page novel for which Danielewski refuses to sell the film rights, is "quirky atmospheric with

a tactile, handcrafted style. It effectively conveys a story and a mood without having to shout about it. Of all the entries, it was the most radical departure from the norm."

Says Lacey: "It's a heavy task to make sense of the book's multiple narratives and often terrifying prose. I still feel, however, that if Danielewski relents we could have an extraordinary film given the right circumstances."

The best entries will be featured in a special digital edition of *LWLies* available online from July 16.





WINNER **HOUSE OF LEAVES** BY THOMAS LACEY



RUNNER-UP **LOLCATS** BY KATIE MARCKS



RUNNER-UP **ROULOTTE** BY MÁXIMO TEJA

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We're going to work hard to bring you exclusive pre-theatrical previews of the films on our radar. It's not about supplanting the mainstream or the

Duke & York's.

On August 10, Universal & LMD Presents Edgar Wright's *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, one of the most highly anticipated films of the year from Britain's brightest young director.

Meet charming and jolly Scott Pilgrim (Michael Cera). A bass-

guitarist for totally average garage band Sex Bob-ombs, the 22-year-old has just met the girl of his dreams... literally. The only catch to winning Ramona Flowers (Mary Elizabeth Winstead): her seven evil sons are coming to kill him. Stone-cunning slacker Edgar Wright (*Hot Fuzz*, *About a Boy*) tells the amazing story of one misanthropic slacker's quest to power up with love in Scott Pilgrim vs. the World.

Make sure you're there – you don't want to miss the start of something special.

Scott Pilgrim vs. the World
in cinemas August 25

www.scottpillarinthemovie.co.uk

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chapter three in which
we discuss themes of
uncommon interest
inspired by the future

What Happens Now?

The future is nearer than you think.



The British Film Manifesto

01

Interviews by

Matt Bochenski


Liz Heycroft

Tom Seymour

Adam Woodward

How has the British film scene changed in the lifetime of *LWLies*, and where is it going from here? We ask the great and the good of British film to offer their insights into the past, present and future of the industry.

Cinema is ever-changing. Aesthetically, culturally and economically, old models are broken down by evolving technologies, artistic progress and economic upheaval. From a distance the process seems at once inexorable and chaotically unpredictable. But how does it feel to those on the front line of change? To answer that question *LWLies* gathered a panel of 15 experts whose experience, influence and perspective encompasses the full spectrum of British film. The brief was to generate a picture of an industry and an art form in flux: to identify the changes, challenges and opportunities which, taken together, hint at where the future might take us.

Given this diversity, conflict was inevitable, but key threads nevertheless emerged: the impact of the digital revolution, changing patterns of consumer consumption, the threat of piracy, monetisation and the difficulty of creating a distinctive cinematic voice in a clamorous new world. But underpinning it was a recurring sentiment – optimism. ‘Cinema will survive’ is the refrain from these industry voices and British film in all its intangible, multi-sensory guises will thrive. 

With thanks to:



Mark Batey

Chairman of the British Film Institute



Clare Binns

Managing Director, British Screen



Zak Brilliant

Managing Director, British Screen



Joanna Coates

Managing Director, British Screen



Catherine Des Forges

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Sandra Hebron

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Ash Kapadia

Managing Director, British Screen



Philip Knatchbull

Managing Director, British Screen



Hannah McGill

Managing Director, British Screen



Mike Newell

Managing Director, British Screen



Danny Perkins

Managing Director, British Screen



Shane Walter

Managing Director, British Screen



Adrian Wootton

Managing Director, British Screen



The Past

How has the British film industry changed in the last five years?



CR: I would say it's changed beyond anything I've ever known in the 20 years I've been working in the industry. What I have been doing over the last five years has been pushing the boundaries because I've done it, we're going to be left behind. In some ways people like the status quo but it no longer reflects what customers want — it doesn't reflect the fact that it's not just the film business that's changed, it's everything that's changed. The way people get information, the way people choose what they want to do, is completely different than it was and that's all down to technology.



SW: I'm surprised it's taken so long, although I understand why because fundamentally people want to hang on to what they know and make as much money out of it as possible. I see myself as part of a generation. We started 14 years ago and back then people were despairing about us and the whole aura of digital. The argument that digital is going to revolutionise film is well and truly won, but back then nobody would believe it. A lot of people in a position of power in the British film industry for me seem really old-school in terms of their vision.



CDP: Five years ago people were saying it's the end of cinema — young people

were watching everything on their mobile phones and on the internet, cinema is about to die. And of course it hasn't, but there has been a proliferation in the way in which people communicate with each other and find out about things that has really affected other cultural activities as well.



AW: I think there's two big things, really. One is getting in with investment and the big American studios to spend money and keep our infrastructure going. We are the only really genuine alternative to making films in Hollywood and we've maintained that position over the last two years. Running in parallel, we've seen a rising independent, low-budget filmmaking sector. You've got people making films in a variety of ways in different parts of the country and a whole range of new talent has come out of that.



MB: The market has become even more competitive, and a lot of the changes are to do with that sheer volume of product — how it's handled, how it's coped with. It has affected all forms of media and entertainment considerably over a five-year span, and it continues to do so. It's an ongoing and fast-paced evolution, but it's very responsive to market forces. Consumers decide for themselves what they're interested in and what they're really not interested in. It's become very consumer-focused.



PA: There is an awful lot of information out there. How do you capture people's attention, particularly through new media challenges like the internet? I think what we're trying to do is carve out a niche for ourselves as a sort of curator if you like of independent film.



CDP: The internet may give you lots and lots of information on lots and lots of new and different things, but you have to know what they are in order to find them. The way of being informed, of knowing what's good or what's not good or what to watch or how to find it, that's become harder.



SH: When there's a multitude of voices and an absolute torrent of work then it's very helpful for people to be able to have some kind of way through it, but we've seen a slight shift to the curatorial model. One of the things that a potentially most interesting and exciting going forward is although there will still very much be a role for the expert gatekeeper, in a way everybody can be a curator now. The whole way in which online discussion can take place means that the role of the curator, who before extremely necessary is also going to be very widely and freely contested, as it should be.

The Present

What are the major challenges facing the British film industry today?



OP: In terms of these small films, we're seeing a polarisation of the market. There's more film released than ever before but people are choosing to see less film.



J: Getting audiences to go and see British film is increasingly tough. What's happened in America is that the studios no longer make 20 or 40 films a year – they make a dozen films a year. And they're massive event movies. I think that makes it a more risky, crowded and difficult context in which to encourage a creative environment where British audiences are hungry to see British film.



SH: Because of the advent of digital there definitely are more films being made. What we're seeing at the same time is a falling away of film that sit within the middle ground. There's a concentration of films at the low-budget end of the spectrum and the very expensive end, but I think a lot of filmmakers would say that it's harder to make work that sits between those two, for an audience that wants a more considered form of storytelling.



CDP: Theoretically because you can make things a lot cheaper today, it should be much easier for filmmakers. But it's harder to get your film seen and your name known.



HM: The distribution market has got more cautious in terms of what it's willing to take up. There aren't as many gambles being taken as perhaps there were five or 10 years ago. There are also fewer independent cinema that are independently programmed and I think that's why the opportunities for smaller film are shrinking.



ZB: Even if you do get British film that, by a miracle, wins the finances and shoots the movie and delivers a film that's half decent because of the amount of product that's out there and the competition for screen-space, and the lack of support for independents with regard to distribution and advertising to promote the movie, these films come and go on about 10, 15 screens. They don't really make any impact. Lots of these small British films do get made and do get released, but you just wouldn't notice it.



CS: In distribution and in exhibition it's all been about control – who holds the control, who's the one that's calling the shots? Now, I would say that what we're trying to do is work much more in partnership with distributors because it is in our own interest, but they have to change as well. The smaller distributors are being more flexible but I think the studios have got much bigger issues to deal with – DVD sales are going down, they're trying to hang on to a huge corporation and there's people like me saying

it's not to change things, I want to change things differently. Everybody is trying to come to terms with the digital present. I think that's just difficult for people – change is frightening.



CDP: The other thing is that because there's been this industrial model, which is something the Film Council's been central to, particular kinds of film are privileged. The cultural spectrum has become narrower. The challenge today is to get your voice heard, especially if it's a voice that's different to what's fashionable.



AK: When you're trying to save money or going into meetings, that's where I feel that people start trying to make you pigeonhole your script into a certain genre. It's like, 'You've got to have a set model or else we don't understand what we're making.' Or, 'You've got to have a genre because otherwise we don't understand what you're trying to make. It can't be different because that's not possible.' It's interesting in British film that aren't necessarily made in North London, they can be made all over. I've made a film, *The Warrior*, in the East. I made *Per North* in the North. I made a film in the States, a shot in Italy, and now I'm making a film in Latin America. The Film Council is fine if it works for you but if it doesn't then maybe some people feel that they have nowhere else to go. It is about you just have to find a way of getting hold of a camera, and then go off and shoot. Shoot on your own.

"You need to go out and make it happen – not ask for it to happen."

show if you have to, if it's good enough, it will get out there. There's no excuse. It's part of the journey of filmmaking.



AC: If you want to make things which are interesting, you need to go out and make it happen – not ask for it to happen because you think it should exist. The passivity that comes from having funding engenders a really bad attitude. You are essentially waiting for permission to make your thing, but I think it would be better if more people felt like they could just get in with doing stuff and experiment and show people what they can do rather than waiting to have the gift bestowed on them.



AW: It's not easy to make a film. There aren't any getting around that. You have had the sea of some public funding schemes like ours where we've created conditions for certain people to create these features, but we've still got quite a long way to go. There aren't many production companies that are sustainable. There's a very small number of producers who regularly get to work, and it's very tough to get the money. The recession has made that more difficult. These production companies are also not necessarily able to hold onto enough of the investment and their rights in the product to build up a portfolio so that they can go out and raise more money for their projects.



IL: I've had many friends of mine who have gone through this tortuous, financially suicidal process. You know, you say the word 'producer' and you get a certain picture of people, but they're actually sleeping on floors and struggling to buy a sandwich at lunchtime.



MM: It's got increasingly difficult. The way things are done these days, you get 10 or so private investors hanging funds in on faith, but there's very little help from a government body or council. There comes a point where you have to look at the public service networks and say "Okay, there's got to be more investment from these sources," and not just financially. It starts from the grassroots, but it ends at the top.



SW: It's a lack of imagination, really, pure and simple. I've had some of the worst meetings of my career with the Film Council – really not too meeting. Like, "What are you doing here? What do you want? And I found that completely unhelpful and quite damaging in terms of spirit."



ZB: The Film Council is always changing, but the likes of BBC Film and Film 4 have really propped up the British film industry. You don't get many independent British films made without some support from one of those three bodies. And it's fair to say in the last five years that their support has been

building. There's been cuts in other areas, private investment has been divided, but those three bodies in the UK have been consistent in their support for the British industry.



MM: I'm sure there will be lots of people out there who are trying to get money out of an organisation like the Film Council and who are failing, and are saying, "I wouldn't give them the skin off my nose." But the Film Council does make the difference. They are bright people and they want to keep it alive.



MM: Bringing creative people together with business people is another way of stimulating the community in this changing climate. I meet amazing young filmmakers, particularly from the States, who have sourced private funding and therefore have complete creative control of their project and in that way there's a determination and dynamism that we don't encourage over here. I think there's something about that slightly more free-market approach that will benefit the industry. It not only allows creative freedom but also takes the bureaucrats out of the equation. It's not only an inevitable shift, it's a necessary one.



ZB: I think there's always hope for the British film industry because there's always talent there. There's always great filmmakers and great acting talent.

The Future

Where do you see the British film industry five years from now?



AN: I think British film is becoming healthier because we're getting the right mix of the old guard – the real world famous directors that have been around for a long time – and a lot of second- and third-generation Asian filmmakers who have got their own cinema, directors who have made three or four films but are still youngish – as well as the young guys who are just making their first time.



RI: There is a continual drive for people to tell stories in the country. I know the equivalent people in Los Angeles and the reason they're doing it is to make a killing. They're looking to be producers because they know somewhere there is a pot of gold waiting where they can buy a house with the sale so high no one will ever be able to see them. And that's just not what drives anyone in the UK. Everyone in the UK wants to be in the storytelling business – at every level and it's incredibly heartening.



NIH: Look at Australia though – they struggle to keep hold of their brightest talents and we're heading towards that. There's no way of sustaining the talent we've got because of the temptation in America.



NN: As you get older, and to some extent luckier, you get swallowed up by Hollywood and all of a sudden there's more money and of course it gets less interesting for

you. You get so be dazzled from the the around you. But when you look out there, when you look through the bars, it actually looks pretty good, although I'm sure it's much more difficult because the money is always a killer.



SW: [Industry executives] like to grab people to be poster boys and girls but they're trying to develop a star system when I don't think we're about that really. There's a magical effect – when it's shiny they'll grab it. But if it's rough and it needs polishing, they're not interested. And I think that is the wrong way round that is the lack of understanding of how to work with this new generation of talent.



PK: I think we've just experienced a perfect storm, in a way, a down-cycle combined with massive market shifts where bar news are being broken down and roles are being torn up because of the speed of development of technology. I see that as a massive opportunity for independent to finally have a bit of a level playing field in terms of being able to compete with monolithic, monopolistic corporations that have been embedded in the industry for over 100 years. So I'm full of optimism. One thing you'll see as distributors getting much closer to the production phase [market forces dictate that if we want the best product, we've got to get involved earlier because there's a lot of competition out there

But something that's grown in parallel with the rapid development of technology is the idea that guys and girls think that they have a right to look at creative content without paying for it.



DP: Things like Facebook, Twitter and the internet have made people want everything right now. I think that will change the way people consume film. As an industry, we have to improve the way we deliver the film to people because if we don't, the pirates will deliver them very effectively. We have to be better than them from a distribution point of view.



MB: We have to get across to more people that if you watch a movie and you're enjoying the story, whether it's preferably in the cinema but anywhere, surely it is right that the men and women who made that film get paid for their work.



PK: We've created the problem ourselves [The studios] create all this pent-up demand in the cinema where lots and lots of people don't want to – or can't – go. They've seen all the marketing buzz and yet for three months they can't legally watch it outside of the cinema. That's creating a over-pricing problem. If they can't buy it legally on DVD, or a download, or stream it somewhere, then if it is readily available illegally, the demand is there and they will take it. ▶

"There's nothing better than seeing a film with a packed house on a big screen."



CB: There's no anxiety about how it's going to go – it's a brand new world and I think we've all just got to go forward in it and learn from our mistakes because there will be mistakes. And to have confidence that people still want to see films in the cinema.



SH: Having worked in the industry for 50 years now, I feel a little like I've been through so many peaks and troughs, and crises and boom periods, and actually in the end from where I sit, what I did see are people with really amazing stories to tell making very interesting films. I suppose the appeal in me wants to think in the next five or 10 years that absolutely will not change, but the political economy of the film industry might shape how that happens – how people get to make films and how people view them.



CBF: Personally I think that cinema will survive forever. Watching films with a group of people together on a big screen – there's nothing like it. It's not the same as watching it on your computer.



SH: One of the observations I would make from the point of view of the London Film Festival is it seems like the more people are able to watch films in a very individual creative way, it's almost the greater the desire for the collective, communal experience. If you look at what's happened with the rising edition of music festivals, or the huge success of literary festivals, it seems like there's a real desire to find communities and share experiences. For the film industry that's a very positive thing.



SW: I think as I see a further fragmentation of what cinema means in Britain, but I think the British film industry will carry on as it is, slowly grasping with the use of digital like trying to truly understand it and understand that the language of film can be enhanced by graphics and animation and low-action mood.




DP: The first reaction to any new platform or format is to panic, but the opportunity with digital is that you can offer so much more choice and you can expose people to a broader range of content. So hopefully their tastes will change. I think it's a lifestyle choice, whether you go to see a live band, or you go to the cinema, there's still a demand. I think there's nothing better than seeing a film with a packed house on a big screen, and sharing that experience with someone.

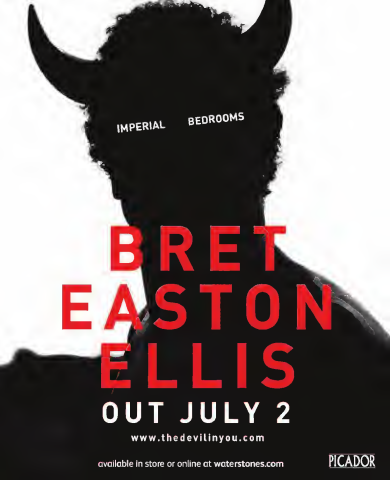


SH: I think one of the things that digital allows people to do is home their craft. It allows people to express themselves and find out if they're destined to be notable filmmakers or not. One of the difficulties in the past is that making films has been and continues to be an expensive business so therefore being able to experiment and try things and being able to fail has been really constrained. Now there's a little more openness.



JK: People are less concerned about the boundaries between art and cinema. I think people like Steve McQueen and Chloë Baehar have opened a grey area, a different space where people have begun to ask, 'Is this art or is this film?' Should it be shown in a gallery or should this be shown in a cinema? The reality for the able of cinema opening themselves up to different sorts of work. 

A companion piece to this article, *Picture Palace: How the 20th Century Fox will live outside online as it opens digital edition cinema* from June 10.



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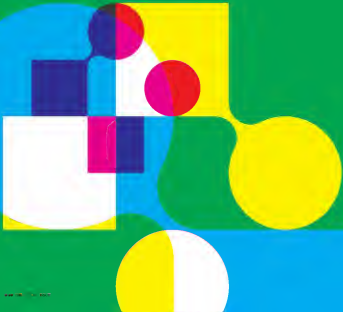
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PICADOR

The People's Cinema





02

There is a battle raging for the heart and soul of cinema. As the uncertain transition from analogue to digital enters its final stages, power is shifting to the gatekeepers of the future – you.

Words: 448, including 240 new words.

Dictionary.com lists 100 words that have changed in meaning since 1963. Here are some. **Prep** has the very basic meaning of "preparation" but in the 1960s it meant "prep school," the elite boarding school that a young person attends in the United States. The meaning of **big** has changed, too. In the 1960s, it meant "big and hairy," but today it means "big and important." **Television** has also changed. In the 1960s, it was a noun, but today it is a verb.

"The time for empires, colonies and multinationals is over. It's time for individuals to share, connect and open each other's horizons."

[illegible]

to be replicated online and, if you look at venues such as the new *Publi* cinema in Shoreditch or Cornerhouse in Manchester, they offer plenty of added extras. Whether that's Q&A sessions or coffee shops and bars, what they all understand is that the social aspect is a crucial element to the experience."



The changing demands of the audience have also seen the emergence of a new kind of cinema. "We're different in that there is no hierarchical structure, nobody is paid for anything and there is no boss," explains Stephenie Constant, one of a dozen collective of volunteers who manage The Star and Shadow in Newcastle. "People have no set jobs and there is no need to ask for permission to do anything; instead, we rented an auditorium and showed several strands – political, experimental, lesbian, gay & transgender – at the Side Cinema in town, but soon discovered that most of those were volunteers – Bessie's Gaze and the Cinema Club." www.sidecinema.co.uk

For 1992, most of the respondents think that the economy will be better than in 1991, but only 36 percent expect it to be much better. The respondents are more pessimistic about the future of the economy than they were in 1991. In 1991, 50 percent of the respondents thought that the economy would be better than in 1990, and 25 percent thought it would be much better. In 1992, only 36 percent think it will be better, and 16 percent think it will be much better. The respondents are also more pessimistic about the future of the economy than they were in 1990. In 1990, 60 percent of the respondents thought that the economy would be better than in 1989, and 25 percent thought it would be much better. In 1992, only 36 percent think it will be better, and 16 percent think it will be much better.



Generation Game



Edgar Wright and Mark Neveldine discuss the new generation of filmmakers who are radically reclaiming the videogame movie for themselves. Adaptation is the past; convergence is the future.

Words by Matt Bochenski

03

From *Super Mario Bros.* to *Prince of Persia*, the videogame adaptation has consistently lived down to expectations. And yet Hollywood continues to spend big money chasing the elusive hit that will turn perceptions of the genre around, and open the financial floodgates to the \$20 billion-a-year games industry.

But even as they looked jealously at its success, the movie studios have treated the games industry with disdain, refusing to acknowledge its cultural and creative impact. "The studios love to stonewall videogames people and push them out and say, 'You guys don't understand movies!'" explains director Mark Neveldine. "When the truth is that the great storytellers are in the videogame world."

Slowly waking up to this fact, the studios decided that the new boomtown was "collaborative", bringing games and film creatives together in a spirit of mutual co-operation. Twenty years after being rejected from NYU Film School, *Prince of Persia* director Jordan Mechner was taken on as a screenwriter and exec producer by Jerry Bruckheimer for the same big screen bow. While on the other side of the fence, Ubisoft's *Assassin's Creed* had full access to James Cameron's extensive library of assets and screen expertise. The result? Two disappointments that failed to harness either the narrative power of film or the interactive thrill of games.

Collaboration is a red herring. In fact, the whole idea of adaptation seems like a lost cause. "In terms of videogame films, I don't see the day when there will be a good adaptation," says Edgar Wright. "If there hasn't been one in the last 15 years, I don't feel like there's a going to be one anytime soon."



The future isn't about chasing resources or finding the right franchise. It's about developing a new nuanced understanding of the ways in which videogames can inspire film. It's about a new movie aesthetic — one that expresses the intuitive feel for and love of videogames inherent in a new generation of directors, a generation raised in Martin Scorsese's *Kill Bill* rather than the old-school picture palaces. If adaptation is the past, this convergent aesthetic is the future.

It has been linked at before — *Run Lola Run*, *The Matrix*, even *Die Hard* all contained recognizable videogame elements (puzzles, challenges, leveling-up, death acts) without an actual videogame in sight. But it's only in the last few years that a persistent vision has emerged. It has come from a group of directors working independently, but taken together the films they have produced represent the start of a new era in the relationship between videogames and cinema, one in which the impact of videogames' cultural influence will be fully realized, in a language that will be understood instinctively by those who share their reference points.

Generation Game will see the impact of *Half-Life* in Neil Blomkamp's *District 9*, the *Modern Warfare* homage in Matthew Vaughn's *Kick-Ass*; the guiding hand of the best-art-to in Edgar Wright's *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*; the sandbox-style information overload of Mark Neveldine and Bran Taylor's *Crank* universe; or the game-within-a-game world of Joseph Kosinski's *TWON: Legacy*.

They aren't milking videogames in their films, nor are they using computers to empty their movies of life, they're using tools and techniques from both media to inform and enhance their work. They aren't making videogame adaptations, they're making videogame movies that are capable of reclaiming that term in much the same way that Spike Jonze and Michel Gondry made the MTV generation respectable.

Edgar Wright likes the development to the evolution of comic-book films in the 1930s, long before *Batman* and *Spider-Man* became billion-dollar phenomena. "For a long time in the '30s and early '40s there was a thing where most of the best comic-book films were not based on comics but were influenced by comics," he argues. "That was always our idea with *Scott Pilgrim* — can we make a really good videogame film that's not based on a videogame? *Scott Pilgrim* is a film about a guy trying to get with his dream girl, but the aesthetics of it are videogames from the opening frames right through to the end. Essentially, the whole film is like the psychedelic dazedness of somebody who has grown up playing consoles — like a dream sequence that doesn't end."

The likes of Kosinski and Blomkamp developed their visual identity making live-action shorts for Bungie's *Halo* franchise, while Kosinski also cut the award-winning *Mad World* promo for Epic Games' *Gears of War*. But for Mark Neveldine, whose *Crank 2: High Voltage* was screened in New York's Whitney Museum of American Art, the inspiration behind the genre-franchise *Exorcism* is about more than a mere familiarity with specific titles. "I feel like gaming is literally being if you're involved with technology," he argues. "If you have a BlackBerry, if you have an iPhone, if you have a 360, a PlayStation, a TV, you are in the gaming world. We're digesting all this information in our newly created ADD brains in a way that's no exponential we don't even understand it. But we are now part of it, we are living in this very organic, real gaming world."

"That's why *Crank 2* especially would feel like a live-action videogame," he continues. "It's more surreal and it's more exploratory than your basic angle-person-or-even-multiple-player-obsession videogame, but nonetheless it blends all of the information that we've digested and that was forced upon us."

**"Scott Pilgrim
is like the
psychedelic
daydream of
somebody who
has grown up
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— like a dream
sequence that
doesn't end."**

For Wright, too, it's important that the visual style of *Scott Pilgrim* has clearly struck a chord with audiences. "There are whole themes that revolve around our videogame iconography that in a normal studio film would be pretty outlandish," he admits. "But what's interesting watching it with a test screening audience is that they totally get it. They don't really need posts or extra lives or things exploding." Now it's time for everybody who doesn't get it: "Catch up."



But convergence cuts both ways — just as a new generation of film directors are carrying videogame iconography into cinema, so game developers increasingly have the technology and the inclination to borrow liberally from the film world.

Jing Tittel, a producer at Breakthru Films whose credits include both the film-to-game adaptation of Spielberg's *Minority Report* and, more elaborately, the game-to-film version of Ubisoft's *Assassin's Creed*, has experienced both sides of convergence, and he believes that the games industry is as guilty as the movie business for the mistakes that have been made in the past — whether the flawed development process of *Avatar*, or ambitious but lackluster projects like Ubisoft's multi-million-dollar *Assassin's Creed 2* movie. *Leverage* ▶

According to Tittel, "It's the industry getting in a room together and going, 'We're doing really well, let's try and pay some people from Hollywood to work on our stuff because we have the money now. We'll pay them even more than they'd be paid on a film because we don't know any better and we're stupid, and we'll let them make 20-minute movies that promote our next big rig-off at *Madison Square*.' It's a history-like way of making things. We need to bring these industries together – but not on the business side."

Instead, he says, the two media should look to their roots, which he locates in another art form altogether: "Intended theatre at NYU and that's at the very base of all these things," he says. "In theatre, you have a stage and you set yourself limitations, and that's something you also have to do in cinema and games in order to create something good. It's getting back to the thing where we all came from – the idea of being stories to each other. And stories don't have to be in words. They can be in blocks and colours and paintings. It's all story. Everything we do is communication."

"Writers and programmers are realising how valuable they are to the entertainment industry. And they should be. These guys are total badasses."

Having made their name with the award-winning *Peter & The Wolf*, Breakthru are now working on a science-fiction project that is being developed concurrently for mobile platforms, television, social networking and, eventually, consoles. It's an integrated way not just of working, but of thinking, building something from the ground up with multiple platforms in mind – going against the odds to subvert your cinema in whatever way they wish. Tittel describes it as 'revolutionary', before adding, "It shouldn't be, but it is."



As videogames become ever more cinematic, and cinema ever more influenced by gaming, new opportunities have arisen in the grey areas between the two. One company taking full advantage is Allen Leitch's SPON, a design and moving image agency responsible for the in-game cut scenes – known as 'cinematic' – in Activision's blockbuster *Modern Warfare* franchise. They are the people who are bringing a film sensibility to gaming, inspired by cinematography, editing and grading – not skills traditionally associated with games.

So it's appropriate that Leitch doesn't see himself as one. "What we are trying to do is bring some of the dynamism from our entertainment business, our TV and film world sensibilities, into the games world," he says. In essence, Leitch is a short filmmaker working with videogame graphics. "Absolutely," he agrees, "that's where the ambition is for us. For me, unless the cinematic that you're sitting through is utterly engrossing, meticulously scripted, directed, lit and shot then I don't want to watch it."

Leitch sees a future where traditional filmmakers and games creators are competing to be the lead voices in a convergent industry. "What's exciting for me," he says, "is to see and realise that the quality of our output can compete with anybody, anywhere, in any sphere." For Mark Neveldine, that time has already arrived. "I think that is happening now," he argues. "The writers and programmers are telling these amazing stories and realising how valuable they are to the entertainment industry. And they should be. These guys are total badasses and they have a lot to say."

One version of the future may look like *Rockstar Games* and John Hilcoat's *Mad/Dead* Wedgwood machines. Short for 'machine cinema', machines refer to the technique of rendering in-game cinematic to tell an independent story. Formerly the preserve of hardcore geeks, The Proposition director Hilcoat used his technique to make a 30-minute short film for *Rockstar's* western-style western, itself a game that is at once heavily influenced by cinema and yet an exceptional experience on its own terms. Here, convergence has come full circle: a director inspired by a game, inspired in turn by his film.

These are still the early days of this new aesthetic, but as Blomkamp, Keeney, Vaughn, Wright, Newell and Taylor cement their position in Hollywood, they mark a lasting change. As Matthew Vaughn puts it, "The geeks have entered the world – it's time now."

For more on videogame editors, check out the feature issue of our magazine, issue 1118, www.bloody-magazine.com issue 1118.

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GARETH PUGH



04

Days of Future Past

Every new era is built on the legacy of the past. As cinema sets off into the digital future, it mustn't forget the physical reminders of its history or our celluloid dreams will turn to decay.

Photography by Julia Solis

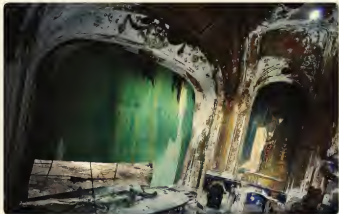


4-58 THE FUTURE ISSUE



Maria Polanco, www.mariapolanco.com

4-59





Melvin, 2008



Melvin, 2008



The Palace - 1980s/90s



Steph. Wilson - 2004



Photo: Sound of Theater



www.abandonedtheater.com

Photo: Sound of Theater

Cinema

Words by **Anna Rasmussen**



Jenin

05

A lonely picturehouse in a Palestinian town near the Israeli border could well point the way towards the future of cinema, and perhaps peace, in the West Bank.





o the residents of Jenin, words such as 'peace' and 'hope' are throwaway concepts – big ideas tossed about by foreign ministers brandishing 'roadmaps'. But in the northeastern tip of the West Bank, nestled at the hills close to the Israeli border, the city has suffered more than most in the ongoing struggle between occupier and occupied. Air strikes, tank incursions and even the arrival of a heavily armoured Israeli Defence Force bulldozer, Jenin has seen it all, often with bloody consequences.

But this August, the opening of an otherwise inconspicuous building just over the road from the town's hectic bus station could become a symbol for future hope, and indeed peace. Left dormant for over 30 years, Cinema Jenin, the town's only movie theatre, is due to welcome guests once again. And to those involved, the move could help reinvent an area synonymous with suffering and dispossession.



The branchchild of a local Palestinian law graduate and a German film director, Project Cinema Jenin has captivated the city, attracted international volunteers wanting to lend a hand, and helped raise hundreds of thousands of pounds in donations to revitalize the area's cultural life.

Marcus Vetter first came to Jenin in 2007. With a string of politically minded films already under his belt, he arrived to direct *The Heart of Jenin*, a quiet, emotional documentary following Izzat Khattab. Just two years earlier, Izzat's young son Ahmed had been shot and killed by an Israeli sniper while playing on the street, his plastic gun allegedly mistaken for a Kalashnikov. In a commendable act of charity, Izzat agreed to donate Ahmed's organs, including the heart, and in doing so helped save the life of a young girl in an Orthodox Jewish family. In *The Heart of Jenin*, Vetter documented Izzat's decision and subsequent journey to visit the donor recipients.

It was through filming that Vetter met Fakhri Hamed, a Jenin resident who had been translating for Izzat. Together they decided to go one step further than simply making a documentary, and actually help make a difference. With nowhere in Jenin to screen their film, reopening the cinema seemed like the perfect plan.

"I felt disturbed about the reputation of this city and the reality," Vetter explains, sipping on a small cup of thick Arabic coffee. "Here the injustice was so big that I felt I had to do something. And having done so many films, I thought now was the time to actually take responsibility and help change something, at least for one film. That's how it all started." And so Vetter has become a regular visitor to Jenin over the past few years. "Every three weeks, I'm here."



Cinema Jenin originally opened in 1958, and in its day was one of the West Bank's biggest movie theatres. Hundreds would flock each night to watch the best Arab film, or sometimes even the occasional action movie from the US. But that was to change in 1987. While the rest of the world was entering to Gordon Gekko declare that "greed is good", his fans in the occupied territories were seeing almost all their cinemas close.

The First Intifada, a four-year period of civil disobedience during which the Palestinians attempted to wrestle back control from their occupiers – often with violent retaliation – had just begun. As the crowd swelled, cinema owners across Jenin, Nablus, Gaza City, Telbarn and the West Bank's other major towns began shutting the doors to their theatres.

It wasn't that the demand for film had faded in the rebellious environment – far from it. But cinemas had become easy targets for the Israeli army. Rather than rounding up youths via inter-consuming door-to-door activities, they could simply run up during a screening and arrest en masse. Hamed, who was a teenager at the time, remembers it well. "The cinema owners didn't want to be accused of helping to collect the Palestinian youths together."

Also, with revolution in the air and sentiments running against the West, many were worried that the odd flash of female flesh displayed in American film might attract the attention of more radical groups. "They were afraid the cinema would be attacked," says Hamed.

So Cinema Jenin was closed, its metal doors locked shut, and the city gradually forgot about its movie theatre. For 30 years the building was left to crumble, its only visitors the pigeons who would flock through the broken windows and roost in the main auditorium.

Having secured a 10-year lease of the premises from the previous owners, the first task for Vetter and Hamed was to evict these leafy neighbours. "It was disgusting," says Hamed. "Can you imagine what it was like, with thousands of pigeons living in there?" Next came the asbestos roof, which needed to be replaced, a feat that was achieved with one of the first donations from a Palestinian company who sold the material at cost price and gave the work for free.

The real influx of money came shortly after, when the German Foreign Ministry took on Cinema Jenin as a charity, donating €172,000. "Then we started a real process," says Hamed. "We brought in experts in sound isolation and cinema work, plus an architect working from Germany."

“We want to say that anyone can come to Jenin, but you must first remove your weapon and wear your normal uniform.”

Around the corner from the cinema, some tents to ease the tension on a four-story building around the corner and help evacuate it into a hotel. “At the very beginning, I was hosting everyone involved at my place,” explains Hamad, “but the team quickly started expanding, and it became impossible to have 15 people staying in a house with just one toilet.”

The new Cinema Jenin Guesthouse now provides cheap dormitory accommodation to the cinema’s informal volunteers, with all proceeds poured straight back into the project. More essentially, its history offers a secluded spot for a few beers in an otherwise conservative Muslim town.

For Vetter, the guesthouse – his Jenin home – is a symbolic monument to what he wants Cinema Jenin to achieve. “We realised that this town needs ordinary people, not just people who are already in solidarity with Palestine. You need to make something to make people from outside dare to come at all when they visit Israel; they drop by Palestine as well.”

And drop by they have. Alongside a team of regulars who have been coming and going from the very beginning, Cinema Jenin has attracted around 150 visitors and volunteers since 2008, each offering their time and experience, sometimes for a day, sometimes for several months.



While the German government helped provide the bulk of the capital needed to get the project going, much of Hamad and Vetter’s work has been tied up in fundraising. And among the individual donors the biggest contribution has come from – of all people – Pink Floyd’s Roger Waters, whom they met at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2006.

“There was a press conference that involved Roger, Jonathan Djiogho, Mikheil Gushelashvili and Christopher Lee,” says Hamad. “At the time I didn’t know who Roger Waters was, but I assumed he must be important given that he was sat with Djiogho.”

Hamad wasn’t initially optimistic that Waters would be interested in the project (“He was in a rush, so I couldn’t listen to me”). But the next day the guitarist gave him a shout-out during a speech while accepting an honorary Cinema for Peace award, and followed that up with an email asking what was required. Hamad eagerly replied: “I said that the last thing I wanted was for him to visit Jenin.”

Waters made a quick tour in May 2009 and impressed with the project, immediately donated money for the sound system. There is even hope that he’ll perform at the launch ceremony in August, possibly with Djiogho attending as well, whose Israeli girlfriend Bar Rafaeli would also be welcome.

Whether turned up, once the initial fervor of the reopening has died down and the non-stop video subtitles fade out, Cinema Jenin still has to continue to function. The idea is to turn it into a full-blown, self-sustainable industry.

“We suddenly thought that we could keep the cinema going through producing time,” says Vetter. “And we can do it through producing advertisements. We can do it through distributing film through the Arab world. And we can do it through dubbing.”

By bringing the art of filmmaking, dubbing and subtitling to Jenin, much needed revenue can be sourced from outside, helping keep the local press low and a team in regular employment. Most Palestinian exports are agricultural and have to pass through retroactive border controls. Something like dubbing is headache-free.

Eventually, the aim is to develop Cinema Jenin as a brand that can be taken to other towns and replicated. “[Given] if they destroy the cinema, the brand can survive,” explains Vetter.

They, of course, are the Israeli soldiers, and while nobody in Jenin would ever dare rule out the possibility of tank battalions rolling back in, Hamad hopes that if and when their neighbours do come to the city because of Cinema Jenin, it will be on a more peaceful trip.

“We invited normal locals to see the cinema and they came. They were walking in Jenin, taking in Helwan, without protection and without bodyguards. It went on the Israeli news: it was a big deal to those who thought that anyone going to Jenin would be killed. We want to say that anyone can come to Jenin, but you must first remove your weapons and wear your normal uniform.”

There’s also a message to the Palestinians: “Through the cinema, we are teaching the culture of peace. The people here in Jenin were sometimes forced, sometimes attracted to meet in wars,” says Hamad, adding that this is why the city is estimated to provide 30 to 40 per cent of the suicide attacks on Israel. “The visitors who will come to Jenin will know the people that only if the environment is peaceful will they come. When there are more people here, everyone feels the benefit. Cinema Jenin is a good way of showing that it is time to meet in peace and give our town a good reputation.” ☺

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06

Music Response

The old-fashioned film score is losing its place to a new breed of artists who favour a more collaborative approach to cinema. **LW**Lies gets lost in the imaginative new world of movie music.

Words by Adam Woodward

Where would we be without the film score? Even before the advent of the film, music had made a profound mark on both the landscape and language of cinema. And from Maxon Carver's 8-lane ladder up to Roger Hauer's tears in the rain, from Ravi Shankar not giving a damn, to Raddy's 72-amp ascent, score-making tunes have become firmly ingrained in the pop culture psyche. But the likes of Danny Elfman, John Ottman and John Williams are old news. The times are a-changin', and not through a post-modern gimmick like 3D. This is a revolution, one that's being led by an independent London-based company called Tonic and its founder, Bonnie Stone.

Since launching in August 2006, Tonic has encouraged and promoted up-and-coming musicians from around the world, growing from an individual endeavour to a four-person creative music agency. Today, Tonic represents artists for festivals and competitions, and works closely with independent and major production companies, helping to assign musicians work on features, television series and adverts. Among Tonic's current clients are established composers such as *Arrestingly* regular Clint Mansell, who recently completed the music for Sean Pertwee's and Kiera Knightley's *Last Night*, and Dustin O'Halloran, who scored Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette*, and has just finished work on *An American Affair* with Gretchen Mol.

Tonic's main focus, however, is promoting the rising stars of the music industry, a new breed of artists looking to cross over into film. The gifted class includes Portland-based multi-instrumentalist Peter Bruckner – who tours regularly with Danish electronic 2b-pop act, Elviking – and former *Twisted Sister* string man Dixon Hiroshi who, through Tonic, signed on to write the music for forthcoming Sundance award-winner *Winter's Bone*.

Hiroshi and Bruckner are two of many promising young film composers, and while Tonic itself is still a fledgling company, Stone firmly believes that the future of music and film collaboration starts here. "There's this new generation of highly talented film composers coming through, and our job is to help develop their talent, because the landscape of film music is changing and there are the guys who are leading the way," she says. "There are a lot of really, really interesting projects and a lot of new people coming into the fold. Right now it's all about connecting these artists with directors and producers, and helping them realise their potential."

"It's still quite regulated in mainstream cinema, but there's a clear change that's here, not on the horizon but in front of us now."

Aside from nurturing the blossoming crop, Stone continues to act as music supervisor on numerous projects, following up her work on *44 Inch Chest* with Anton Corbijn's multi-anticipated thriller *The American*. It's Stone's wealth of experience that puts Tonic at the fore of this contemporary shift towards a deeper collaboration between filmmakers and musicians, but while there's a rich talent pool to be tapped, Stone appreciates that not everyone shares her spirit. "At the moment there are really two camps: the Hollywood *à la* composers and the obscure, aspiring musicians, and that's it. There's really not a lot in the middle," she explains. "The traditional camp is pretty set in its ways, but also dominance is actually being diluted and I think although it will come it's weaker. There's definitely a real momentum right now. The current situation is that studios are not willing to take too many risks on young composers. That's where we come in and help them build a reputation, whether that's via television, adverts or whatever."



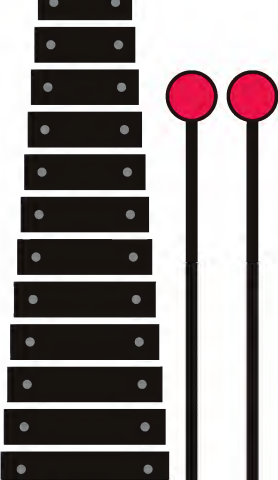
While there is a clear positive flow within certain artistic circles, resistance from major studios means that exposing new musicians to wider audiences is still an uphill battle. But the willingness of agencies like Tonic, and the encouraging attitude of the art scene, are ensuring the steady growth of this new community and, thanks to a handful of visionary, risk-taking filmmakers, the grip of the old guard looks set to be broken. While indie rockers Spike Jonze and Karen O joined forces for one of 2009's most high-profile theatrical releases, *Where Do We Go Now?*, more and more unique filmmaker/musician partnerships are beginning to take root and flourish.

As Tonic continues to pull the strings behind the scenes, the future direction of the film score rests in the hands of an independent network of trend-setting collaborators. More frequently, artists are being commissioned to lay down original tracks for feature film rather than simply having their existing work sampled. According to Stone, projects like *The Moby Project*'s soundtrack for Jonze are set to become a staple, not just in indie circles, but in mainstream cinema as well.

"We're already seeing indie cinema embrace this change," she argues, "but now we're getting huge film franchises experimenting with soundtracks too. Take *Twilight* for example. The *Elopes* soundtrack features exclusive, original tracks by a range of recording artists, and the soundtrack is being released weeks in advance of the movie premiere. In many ways, it's as big a deal to the target audience as the film itself. In my experience," she continues, "it's still quite regulated in mainstream cinema, but there's a clear change that's here, not on the horizon but in front of us now. I've seen it work as an organic process with films like *East Through The Gift Shop*, which was unique in the sense that there was no clear vision of what [the filmmaker] wanted the score or the tone of the piece to be."

Considering its anarchic, anti-commercial agenda, *East Through The Gift Shop* might not be an ideal template to follow, but increasingly artists and filmmakers are collaborating on a non-commercial level.

While Moby's seminal 1999 album *Play* became the first record to have each one of its 18 tracks licensed for use in film, television programmes and adverts, his latest, self-distributed, *UP, With For Me*, directly contrasts the profit-driven MD of the music industry. Indeed, Moby has personally



commissioned an array of filmmakers to direct a short film to accompany a specific song on his album, from David Lynch and Mark Pellington to lesser-known visual artists like Jessica Dumack.

From a commercial standpoint, it's the kind of creative experiment that few are willing to back, but for Moby this brings a new-found sense of artistic freedom. "Releasing the music itself is tedious, as the decision can be made based on integrity and creativity and not on album sales or market hype," he says. "It's safe to say that a major label wouldn't be inclined to have a David Lynch video that can't be played on TV or a Jessica Dumack video that shows a woman shooting up in a bathroom, but having the work attached to my music has been a breath of fresh air in my career."

As an extension of this conceptual venture, Moby has also launched Moby Goes, an online internet community where independent filmmakers and fan artists can download songs for free to use in non-profit projects. Of course, Moby is a commercially successful artist working in the upper echelons of the pop industry, but no matter how far down the food chain you go, the drive and desire to innovate and fracture convention is tangible.



Also breaking the mould is Danny Penz, whose four-year project with New York indie-folk outfit Animal Collective resulted in Kenneth Anger-inspired psychedelic musical album *GOODSAC*. As an underground filmmaker looking to set the pace, Penz admits he seldom bumps at the borders of the art establishment movement. "The structure of *GOODSAC* is totally new. It's really shocking people, and that's the best thing about it," he says. "What's so exciting for me is that the new wave is growing in parallel with technology. There's a cross-pollination element to it that means no one really knows how it's all going to turn out."

GOODSAC not only represents a significant departure from traditional film/music collaboration, it is also a journey onto an enchanted exhibition plane. "The real beauty with the uncertainty is that there's no right or wrong way of engaging with it or consuming it," says Penz. "It could be underground in a makeshift room projected onto a ceiling in a room filled with beanbags, or it could be a live, interactive event." Although *GOODSAC* might well suit the former, less spontaneous events have come into focus across the UK in recent years, with live screenings of classic silent films offering audiences a unique, rare total, theatrical experience.

British Sea Power and Maxine Peck have delivered *Also of And* and *The Man Who Laughs* respectively while Persian duo Zombi Zombi have taken conceptual scoring to new heights with their strong accompaniment to Sergio Eisenstein's *Ballad of a Soldier*. "It's stunning how you can give a different interpretation to images with music," says drummer Cosmo Newman. "Playing live in front of an audience is a rush for everyone, and it gives you more energy to the movie than any Dolby sound system ever could."

With its many talent links open for re-scoring, audiences can expect to see an influx of talented musicians experimenting, recycling and reworking similar cinematic classics. And with agencies like Tonic bringing new music to the masses at the other end of the scale, there's no telling how far up the revolution might reach. ■



07 Celluloid Tiger

Site on Expeditions



If China's industrial rise to power is echoed in its cinema, the pop culture compass of film could soon swing from West to East. Simon Fowler, film editor of Time Out Beijing, investigates whether Mandarin is about to become the mainstream.

The last few years of sweeping and prophetic images in Chinese film of the last 20 years are not cinematic at all. The sight of 2,000 churches keeping silent in silence at the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics or the epic show of love and paganism at the palace for the sixth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic were heralded as an ending of a superpower finding its feet.

What's so remarkable about these highly edited events is that the narrative between the political and the artistic was provided over by Zhang Yimou. Like his contemporaries in the 1980s Generation of Chinese filmmakers, Zhang is a first-time in the late 1970s and early 1980s saw art as a resistance – almost identical to the young authors known as *Ju Du* and *Naive* (Red Rebels). As he explained for two century, however, Zhang is a first novelist in the 1980s that made a radical leap to the mainstream with politically safe period drama films such as *Hero* and *The House of Flying Daggers*. With the opening ceremony of 2008 and the decade of 2009 it was beyond any doubt, Zhang, like many Chinese filmmakers, had paid his dues and made his peace with the Party.



Historically, Chinese cinema has always been with a heart beating patriotism, but the films of the past few years and, indeed, those of the near future look set to accelerate the trend. The main sat squarely behind this movement is Han Sanping, the supremely powerful CEO of the state-owned China Film Group, the China Film

China, the largest production company and distributor in the country, maintaining close ties to the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT). China's censorship board.

In 2006, Fan was charged with making

- In 2006 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Chairman Mao's ascension to power, what emerged was *The Founding of a Republic*, with director Zhang Yizhi, Qu Jue, Yue Stephen, Chen Andy, Lu and Bai Lu, a few of the 100 in more Chinese actors, directors and artists who took part in the film – without receiving any hint of its plot. He packed with talent was *China's Young Director*, Xue Jiao. His first was a war-torn tale about the suffering most of the first 30 years of a cruel, unrelenting rule. The last was a love story, *Love in the 19th Century*. The film is gripping, seductive and subtly unsettling. Of course, it was one of the biggest cinematic hits. Chinese love story fiction, setting in more than 1900 (editor: RMB)

But economic success is just part of his plan. Sparing a pan for China's first lady, an interview with the Associated Press in 2000 he noted that for him, life is the best way to "express China's value system and also China's soft power." Furthermore, the film he produces or distributes with his company must entail the way in which "China as a nation and a race is prospering. There can't be anyone who makes fun of it. People who do suffer have ulterior motives or they're mentally challenged."

Such attitudes are not only emanating from state-owned companies. Huay Brothers, the country's largest independently owned producer company, released their personal salute to the party. *The Message* in 2009. The film was an espionage tale set in 1940s Nanning and followed a group of resistance fighters defying the Japanese. It was and a box office success.

"In China, either you move into the mainstream or you will simply disappear into obscurity."

Although the political overtones of these films are greeted with indifference in Hollywood (if not Washington), the ringing of cash registers would have certainly made them sit up and take notice. With year-on-year box office revenue growing 35 per cent in China, and with the consistent addition of more cinema screens and a swelling middle class, just how big China's film market may yet become is anyone's guess. The Americans, of course, want a piece of the action.

As it currently stands, however, getting a film onto Chinese screens is a tricky business. SARFT has an official quota of 30 films per year, and anything submitted with remotely sensitive content can count as not being granted a screening licence. Distribution is then fully handled by Han Sanyang at the China Film Group – which takes a share of the profit. A lot of major films never make it to China due to their political sensitivity or simply a lack of space. One way to guarantee a spot, however, is by making the movie a co-production between the US and China.

Remember 2008's *The Forbidden Kingdom*? It was supposed to be the highly anticipated first screen pairing between legends Jackie Chan and Jet Li, but in fact was a lurgid, by-the-numbers kung fu family flick. And yet it was profitable both in the US and China, paving the way for a slew of co-productions to appear in the near future. Will Smith has already got in on the act, producing the remake of *The Assassin* Kof alongside the China Film Group, while the *Wanted* Shanghai will receive a release sometime at the end of 2010 courtesy of the Huayi Brothers. It all sounds like simple commerce, but the most interesting thing about this arrangement is how bilingual films with a predominantly Chinese cast might become more of the norm in Western theatres.



There is one item on the horizon that may tip the scales in the relationship in favour of the Americans. In December 2009, the World Trade Organization ruled that China must break its monopoly on the distribution of homegrown movies, if enforced (no one is sure it can be)

other distributors within China will have the right to import as many blockbusters from the US and elsewhere as they like. Because despite the growth in indigenous genres like kung fu, there are a plenty of gaps that could easily be filled with films from outside. And this has some within the Chinese movie industry worried.

"If you take Taiwan as a model, you can see that in the 1970s they had a large indigenous film industry, but when the market became flooded with a competitive product from the US, it almost entirely disappeared," says Becker Rees, producer of Zhang Yuli's 2008 romantic-comedy *Adoptive's Revenge*. "In Hong Kong they had a highly developed market with the Shaw Brothers and they were able to withstand the presence of American film until the industry imploded in the 1980s."

Becker is one of many producers who believe that the Chinese market is not yet developed enough to withstand the influx of American movies. If the WTO ruling is upheld "There will always be a place for Chinese companies to make films like *The Founding of a Republic* that appeal to the Party, but that is just a small part of the industry. The rest could be in a lot of trouble," he says.

For the time being the future seems to lie on the one ruling. Meanwhile, many have blamed the fact that China is reluctant to introduce a ratings system which would make some films off-limits to younger viewers for fueling the domination of safe period films and unapologetic comedies.



Another problem is that where diversity does exist in China, there is almost no exposure. Independent filmmakers are spending outside of the tightly controlled system risk facing lengthy bans if they exhibit their films at the big festivals, but rely on the patronage of European production companies to get their films made. The result is that directors like Jia Zhang-ke and Wang Quanxi, who regularly walk the red carpet at Berlin or Cannes, and are heralded by Western critics as modern masters, get absolutely no distribution within China.

"The current situation is a joke," laments Zhang Xiaomai, actor, professor and organiser of the China Independent Film Festival. "In China, there's more and more construction of cinema but no representation of alternative product. I would say that independent films account for less than one per cent of content in China." Despite this situation, Zhang remains upbeat about the prospects for low-budget and alternative filmmakers. "With all these cinema seats to fill, distributors will look for diverse movies that they can sell to the Chinese people. Chinese people will grow tired of films that don't represent their way of life," he says. "And when filmmakers learn how to tell stories for people from the far west of China, or the south, then that's how smaller stories will find their way onto the screen."

The lure of the big time will always be there for China's independent directors. Zhang Yimou's mellowness so spectacularly that he's now the darling of the Party. Zhang Xiaomai sees the temptation as something that will end up happening to all filmmakers. "In China we don't really have the concept of 'alternative' like you do in the West because we don't really have an alternative," he says. "Alternative" means that you have a choice, in China it's more like growing old. Either you will move to the mainstream and work with them eventually, or you will just simply disappear into obscurity."

For now the cinema experience in China is the preserve of a relatively small section of society. As ticket prices hover around 60RMB (\$8), compared to 10RMB for a pirated DVD, it's not surprise that many prefer to get their fix of cinema at home. Whether or not the WTO order does force an opening up of the market, the only certainty is that the Chinese government will react in the slowest way possible. Because they don't have to move fast for anybody. **B**

Screenfinder is 131 Chinese Movies will be published in October by Canongate Books.
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chapter four in which
we review the latest
film releases



THE ILLUSIONIST

by Dave Karger

Based on a script written half a century ago by the late master of movie cinema, Jacques Tati, *The Illusionist* was originally intended as slow action production. But when Tati's daughter Sophie decided she couldn't bear to see an actor attempt to capture her father she turned to France's leading animator, Sylvain Chomet.

Tati's story may be about an illusionist, but Chomet's film is not magic realism. Strange and ethereal yet bliskly rooted in the real world, it is as if a peacefully adult love story has been adrifted by a child's imagination and then rendered by pencil watercolor.

Chomet's protagonist, a travelling companion is clearly modelled on Tati's persona. Though a noble profession in the vaudeville era, by the 1930s the weathered gentleman's carefully

practical stage act is in a dying art. As Tati travels from city to city, dutifully losing his simple tricks on dwindling crowds before carefully counting his meagre pay, we realize that he has lost relevance in this modern age.

After a chance encounter, and out of pride and desperation to continue his trade, Tati travels to the Scottish Hebrides. Only amongst the rough heven provincials does he find a warm and welcoming audience. He also discovers Alice, a ridiculously shy young woman who seems never to have left the island. She is obviously fascinated by this elegantly formal older man and tentatively begins to wash his clothes and wash his room with a fire. He responds to these ample acts of kindness by replacing her worn-out boots with a pair of bright red shoes. This gift delights her, as if

he is capable of true magic.

They travel together to Edinburgh in order to start a new life, living intimately in a hotel full of oddly creative characters. Despite their small nervous reservation, a sense of belonging bridges the gulf of age and culture. His though has a life stretching behind him, hers a still to discover. In their increasingly separate lives, each sees in the other a painful recognition that they must part.

That is hardly an original story but it joins a royal heritage. Brief Encounters, Before Sunset, In the Mood for Love and Lost in Translation are recalled, and like each of these films, *The Illusionist* wears its universality with pride while gently subverting it.

Chomet's animation is genuinely breathtaking. Rarely have minis cigarette smoke and rippling water

been used to such a degree and with such an effect. Paris, London and Edinburgh are each drawn with tangible emotion. The depth of field imitates shading, the pools of shimmering light, the softly melodic score - this is a unique talent.

The Illusionist feels like a distant memory of a childhood you never had. As only great cinema can, it possesses and partially obscures the momentary beauty and immeasurable sadness of that fuzzy old life. This is a melancholic world, but you won't want to leave it. **Tom Sproston**

Anticipation. Festival audiences surrounded the French film. **D**

Enjoyment. A watching experience. **B+**

In bedrock. After this, you may need want to see *La Vie en Rose*. **D**



THE SECRET IN THEIR EYES

"A man can change anything," remarks Sandoval (Guillermo Francella) at a crucial juncture in *The Secret in Their Eyes*. "His face has become his family; his girlfriend his religion, his God." But there's one thing he can't change — he can't change his passion.

It's this unwavering passion, along with memory, anger, and justice, that is central to Juan José Campanella's brilliant film. Based on Eduardo Sacheri's novel *La Propiedad del Oso*, and featuring an excellent cast led by Ricardo Darín and Soledad Villamil, this is another sparkling jewel in modern Argentine cinema's crown.

Campanella flits between past and present as married Federal Justice Agent Benjamin Epso (Dado) revisits the ghosts of his past

Bored and unsettled with how his life has turned out, he decides to write a novel about a murder case he investigated 25 years earlier, one that has haunted him ever since.

The flashbacks are set in 1974 — a time of rising political violence between rival factions in the lead-up to Argentina's bloody dictatorship. Although Campanella doesn't focus on the dark darkness of Argentina's history, the period remains key to the story, focusing on issues of impunity and retribution.

Epso struggles with his novel, unsure where to start. "Start at the part you remember the most," suggests Irene Hastings (Villamil), a long-time colleague. And so he begins with her. "We learn that he has loved her from the moment they

met, but has never had the guts to act on his feelings. We learn that also loved her too, but was waiting for her to make the move. Rich with symbolism (doom opening and closing are particularly prominent) it's a story of words unspoken, business unresolved and looks with hidden meanings. Fittingly, it is a gaze that gives a secret away and solves a murder case.

But the murder mystery isn't the only spine puzzle Epso is trying to complete. He's also scrambling to fit together the missing pieces of his own life. It is a process that grips throughout, but by the time Campanella brings closure to Epso's painful soul-searching after 125 minutes, it has also become frustrating to watch for an audience to whom the solution

appears blindingly obvious.

And yet *The Secret in Their Eyes* is one of those films you'll find yourself returning to again and again. Not only for its engrossing love story drama and occasional comic moments (denying fiery dialogue between Epso and dislikable colleague Sandoval) but also for its beautiful and artistic cinematography courtesy of veteran DP Félix Mesa. **Christian Monroe**

Anticipation. Surplus writer of some beguiles during the year's awards season. Expectations are high. **D**

Delight. A big dollop of (sexual) tension, flashes of humor, and a brilliant cast. **D**

In Retrospect. A stylish and intelligent Argentine offering... destined to become a world cinema classic. **D**

BEAUTIFUL KATE

12.14.10

BEAUTIFUL KATE
DIRECTOR: RACHEL WARD
CAST: RACHEL WARD, NEIL PATTON, BRUCE MENDENHALL

Wholly uncompromising but elegant in its *Beautiful Kate* makes a shift into fiction: directing for actress Rachel Ward, whose script scintillates with Newton Thornberry's American-set novel onto the grassed dunes of rural South Australia. The results are disquieting, marking one of the most convincing films to come out of Australia for some time.

Prodigal son Ned Kendall (Ben Mendelsohn) returns to his Flinders Ranges family home during what he assumes will be the last few months of his father's life. Ned is a writer with a girlfriend half his age (Melanie Lynskey) who's left the nursing of comatose Bruce (Bruce Mendenhall) to his younger sister Sally (Rachel Gifford) so he can escape the confines of this rural space.



Seemingly stuck in the middle of nowhere, the Kendalls' home is oppressively hot and bright by day and flooded with misty darkness by night. As Ned returns to do moments of growing up in the house alongside his twin sister—the enigmatic Kate—and older brother, who both died during his term. Locating the root of Ned's fractious relationship with Bruce is their emotionally fraught formative years, the story oscillates between past and present—discreetly but ruthlessly uncovering the long-buried truth of those times.

Beautiful Kate confronts some truly dysfunctional family issues with a commendable lack of moral judgements, skillfully padding out its characters with some mean and irrational traits but never letting them veer into the purely dislikeable. In fact, despite some shocking behavior, they have a heightened humanity, which ultimately down to the film's exceptional cast.

Ward often multi-faceted performances, especially from Mendelsohn, who is infused with an emotion that's vulnerable and threatening by turns. His Ned is a

man on the run from a confusion stretched in his youth that refuses to be excused, even when chastised out by nervous father and son in the final few days they have left together. **—Laura Isaacs**

Entertainment: Good cast who will probably deliver more than the plot would suggest. **A**

Equipment: Cinematography is not award but absolutely brings to mind, but this is good stuff. **B**

In retrospect: Beautifully acted and shot, making Ward out as a director of note. **B**

FRONTIER BLUES

FRONTIER BLUES
DIRECTOR: JEFFREY L. LUKAS
CAST: JEFFREY L. LUKAS, JEFFREY L. LUKAS

12.14.10

Hansen (Abelard Kintyre) — a slick-powder, bespectacled teen — lives with his uncle Kasim (Richard Shalvett) near the town of Gogan in the Texas border province of Coleman. Life is slow and he is strange. He listens to vintage French pop on a portable tape recorder. He picks at dried apricots studied in the deep pockets of his oversized parka. At night, when Kasim is in bed and he's alone, Hansen fondles the breasts of a mannequin brought back from his uncle's clothes store. Take heed as the Texas equivalent of Napoleon Dynamite without the western convenience of *Tater Tots*.

If Jared Niles' 2004 indie hit is one of the obvious influences on *Blues*, Jalek's debut, then Wes Anderson's *The Royal Tenenbaums* is another. Like Anderson, Jalek



is interested in the balance of hope and futility in human ambition. His modest characters (chicken farmers, traveling musicians, sheep assistants) have modest ambitions (to move from the dunes of Gogan into the town). He frames them in midshots — my, against the wide, bleak countryside of northern Texas — and these scraps help his audience to maintain the same ironic detachment that Anderson and Niles know so well. The effect is depressing — a clever reflection of the mood of the contemporary perhaps, but one that resonates deeply on the lofty legacy of classic American cinema.

And yet Jalek seems to recognize

his limitations. A key story strand of *Frontier Blues* sees an elderly Turkman being wooed by a photographer determined to catch his subject's "real" life. The photographer's idea of a real Turkman is an infant he adores, and he refuses to confront any version other than the one he already has in his head. Jalek has compared himself to this character and, faced with a film weighed down by scenes included because they look odd rather than help the story, it's easy to agree with him.

Not much happens. Hansen takes a menial job in a chicken farm

Kasim confer a batch of clothes too large for any of his customers. A lost boy bids to impress his beloved's parents with ambitious but weightless plans. The sadness is measured. The moments are slight. It's such and very and cheap. It's also rather better. **—Henry Barnes**

Entertainment: It comes from a really good one of the world? Could be good. **B**

Equipment: We wanted her. We got it via Hollywood. **B**

In retrospect: Flat, slow and stretched out — much like the Gogan countryside. **C**



COCO CHANEL & IGOR STRAVINSKY

STYLING: ANJA MOUGLA
HAIR: ANJA MOUGLA
MAKEUP: ANJA MOUGLA

BY JEFF

Chris Greenhalgh's novel about the love affair between fashion icon Coco Chanel and musical genius Igor Stravinsky is brought alive by Jan Kounen's elegant direction, and the gorgeous production design of Marie-Hélène Salmon.

Thought it begins with Anja Mougla: Coco cutting the straps of her corset, the rest of the film is far more sophisticated. Stravinsky (played by Mads Mikkelsen) was the maverick Russian composer whose Paris debut, *The Rite of Spring*, caused a riot in 1913, one witnessed by an awe-struck Chanel. Stravinsky captured the clamorous unrest of modernity, prefiguring the rage and erasmos of the Futurism at a time when Chanel himself was altering perceptions of a woman's place in society.

Their first meeting ends abruptly, with a door slammed in Chanel's face, but seven years later war and revolution have resumed the composer and his family—including his sick wife Katia (Elena Morozova)—in Paris, where they are offered lodgings and a place to work in Chanel's beautiful villa on the outskirts of the city. Here, two scenes will play out concurrently—a blossoming attraction and the slow, sad death of a marriage.

Kounen's smartest move is to present Chanel and Stravinsky's developing intimacy as an extension of their genius. Rather than striving to interpret their personalities through the scraps, everything is revealed in their work, their method, their demanding creativity.

Stravinsky works as the piano, feeling the music in his fingers just as Chanel feels the physicality of fabric to find inspiration. But Greenhalgh still finds a place for verbal fireworks—"You're not an artist, you're a shopkeeper!" Stravinsky tells his lover during an argument. "I'm as powerful as you are," she shoots back, "and more successful."

Mougla and Mikkelsen are exemplary—sensual and charged—but it's Kounen's direction that impresses. As times his roaming, restless camera matches the reaching cadences of Stravinsky's music, an often a reflect the precise patterns of Chanel's designs, with matching scenes and subtle repetitions. His

best moment is the tragic shot of Katia as she walks away from the room where her husband and his mistress are making love, out into the sunbath where she slowly dissolves into the light.

It is an elegant scene in a film that matches the timeless perfection Chanel used desperate to create—a complex blend of personality, invention and inspiration. **Matt Bochonski**

Anticipation The world doesn't really need another Coco Chanel biopic. **B**

Upshot But that's not what this film is. It's a tragic and sophisticated love story. **D**

In the end The results—both Kounen's and Chanel's—will continue to inspire. **D**



MOTHER

2020

MOTHER
Kim Hye-ja
10/10

Kneeling. Nudging. Micking your toes. Just three things that *Mother* isn't about. Following his cult monstrosity *The Host* – the highest-grossing film in South Korean history – veteran director Bong Joon-ho's new movie is an elusive genre hybrid: a horror-comedy-mystery-thriller. It might look more reserved than a B-Rick about a giant flesh-eating tadpole, but don't be fooled. *Mother* is just as dark, gripping and primal.

Bong kneads us off balance right from the start with a violent slapstick hit-and-run in a rural Korean village. The story revolves around the idea of that village 35-year-old Do-joon (Jeon-ho's 'Wim Bin') and his oddball single mother, played by Korean TV's beloved matriarch Kim Hye-ja.

Darkness falls quickly, as a promiscuous schoolgirl is beaten to death by an unknown killer who leaves her body dangling from the roof of an abandoned building. Afflicted by a goldfish memory, sweet, simple man-child Do-joon can't recall a thing. But given his violent explosions (don't call him a 'tender'), anything could have happened.

Yanked forward by sudden shocks, the plotting feels a little distracted by various subplots that pull us away from the film's title character. But once Hye-ja turns detective to find the real murderer, her maternal instincts go into overdrive and *Mother* quickly adopts the same vibe of Bong's social-thriller masterpiece *Memories of Murder*.

Putting a fresh spin on the thriller genre by using a middle-aged woman as its narrative engine, *Mother*'s special vibe derives from the uncertain knowledge that Hye-ja will do absolutely anything to prove her son's innocence – whether he's innocent or not. Regularly wrong-footing your expectations, this portrait of skewed motherhood slowly unravels with a quirky black humour that syncs perfectly with the vivid performances. Technically, it's effortless.

Whipped up in tremendous sound design and stylish cinematography, Bong's film is at its best revealing both shocking surprises and, and secrets at a measured pace.

The film ends as surely as it begins, although in truth it never quite captures the emotional tragedy that elevated *Memories of Murder*. Despite that, *Mother* confirms that Bong Joon-ho is the only man seriously vying with Park Chan-wook for the title of Korean cinema's most talented dark master. **Jonathan Cracker**

Anticipation. Bong made *Memories of Murder* and *The Host*. After those we'd watch him make bass. **D**

Biggest. An extreme meltdown that quickly turns into heartbreak and horror. **D**

In retrospect. Yet another quality hit from the Bong. **D**



SOUTH OF THE BORDER

CRITICS

PHOTOGRAPH BY
MICHAEL GOODMAN

Though ostensibly a political road movie, *South of the Border* is a crustily an excuse for Oliver Stone to gawk around Latin America cracking wise with the "roof" Hugo Chavez and the multiple leaders of a new socialist movement.

Like his quote Michael Moon, Stone is a lapsed liberal polemicist who evidently thinks "nausea" is something you eat with chips. If this documentary were a Brit, it'd probably be digging an organic latrine in Parliament Square, smacking PG Tips and mooring the Met.

Placed in strangely self-aware guerrilla-doc style—as if the sound guy has been told to repeatedly drop the boom in shot—Stone assumes a shotgun approach to his perceived targets. The right-wing press, the left-wing press, the International Monetary Fund, the Bush administration, free-

marketizing and neo-con foreign policy in general are deconstructed with all the precision of a grumpy bull. "America has friends whose leaders do what we tell them to do, and enemies whose leaders occasionally disagree with us," Stone prods at his whippersnapper. "Wow, that sounds nice. Someone should have told Condoleezza Rice."

In Stone's tonic for right-wing excess, Chavez is depicted as a benign, socially democratic champion of wealth redistribution. It's likely Amnesty would have something to say about that, as would any of Venezuela's multiple political prisoners, but they are never given a podium, nor even acknowledged.

Not to say the film isn't frequently hilarious, largely due to Chavez's unshuffled brand of statesmanship: he looks like he's

having an asthma ball. Addressing the United Nations, his accusation that George Bush is the devil is knocked off with a come's-awwyer—"I can still smell the sulfur in the room." Showing Stone around a Venezuelan corn factory, he quips "This is where we are making the Iranian bomb."

It's all very entertaining, but denting Fox News and the Bush administration is about as difficult as denting a puppy. So what's the point? Is there a cause? You can see their scheming and back-slapping Raul Castro while he tells of another 50 years of the revolution, but Bush still had congress, and the anchors on Fox News—like Stone himself—are still allowed to crucify the government. Cuba, on the other hand, can be incriminated for using the internet.

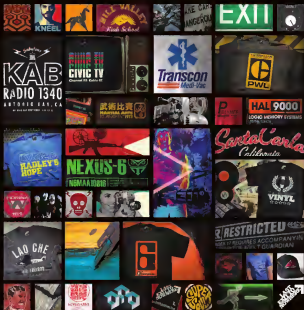
Rabble-rousing, angry and infused with a pseudo-exponential

sense of floral celebration, this is a genuine film devoid of genuine research. The wider compelling narrative we are promised is only hinted at, leaving us with little more than a PR stunt for ambiguous Third World governments. For someone who was sent to Vietnam in the name of liberalism, Stone should know that, when the chips are down, ideology is quickly lost, power corrupts, as someone said, and no government should be given a free pass. **Tom Seymour**

Anticipation. With a premiere at the Vancouver Embassy, Stone and Chavez are clearly aware about their cinematic quest. **B**

Equipment. I'd open season on Stone's old film cameras, but that's hardly a surprise. **C**

In Retirement. Disappointing shallow argument—US cinema needs a new liberal director. **D**



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CATHERINE BREILLAT: ADULTE TERRIBLE INTERVIEW BY ADAM WOODWARD

SELECT FILMOGRAPHY CATHERINE BREILLAT

Requiem (2002)
The Last Women (2001)
Jeune fille (1999)
On a Bouche (1992)
Infatigable (1991)
Le Hâ (1987)
Requiem (1982)
Portrait d'une femme (1980)
Nuits (1977)
Notre Dame (1976)
A Paris l'été (1975)

The self-proclaimed 'parrain' of French cinema, Catherine Breillat's filmmaking career began with a bang 34 years ago. Or, rather, an explosion of controversy. At just 28, Breillat became the youngest director ever to have two feature debut banned, when 1976's *A Real Young Girl* (an adaptation of her fourth novel, *Le Souffle*) became the centre of a vicious critical firestorm and turned Breillat into one of the most notorious filmmakers of her generation.

Although *A Real Young Girl* remained prohibited from theatrical exhibition until 1999 due to its explicit depiction of a 14-year-old girl's sexual awakening, Breillat continued to build a career in what would become the New French Extremity movement, along with her contemporaries Georges Méliès, Bruno Dumont and François Ozon. Remaining steadfast in her exploration of female sexuality, Breillat's uncompromising disposition earned her the unfortunate moniker 'the adulter of porn'. It's an unflattering label that has stuck, but it's one Breillat challenges with a few series of self-insults. "My films are not pornographic," she insists. "My work is no more pornographic than a piece of fine art you would find in any museum. Like art, or then not, at least, I approach my work without barriers."

Breillat's films continue to attract a unique space between the frontier of high art and the borders of social taboo. Yet conservative audiences have undoubtedly become more broad-minded in more than a few days of *A Real Young Girl*. Perhaps ironically, the visceral flashes of teenage copulation and sweet perversions of Italian pornography that propped up the films of *Vigils* (1993), *Romance* (1996) and 2004's *Anatomy of Hell* have become more specifically dispersed throughout Breillat's recent ventures.

Nevertheless, in defending her long-standing rationale, Breillat suggests she's still a cinematic radical to be reckoned with. "I do not pretend that my recent films are more toned down in terms of sexual impudence, but my desire to push boundaries has never been stronger," she says. "Real artists have always acted in this way, and in particular painters and musicians have always been defined by their desire to push the limits of convention and taste. If you're a painter, you're often the subject of scandal. Picasso was a great painter, but he was also a sensationist. Even Victor Hugo had his scandals."

While causing scandal may seem like second nature to the somewhat-profile-fettersed wild child, Breillat's latest film, *Bluebeard*, is more a testament to her steadfast proficiency than insurance of her reputation as a provocateur. *Bluebeard* is a work of refined poise that will see Breillat garner attention for all the right reasons. More significantly though, it's a sign that, at 61, Breillat is by no means a filmmaker beyond her years. Quite the opposite, in fact.

Returning to her own youth to tackle sibling rivalry and the bleak reality

of outgrowing childhood innocence, Breillat reveals a very personal affiliation with the seventeenth-century story that inspired her film. "Like many little girls, growing up I loved things that frightened me," she explains. "I first read [Charles] Perrault's book, *Le Petit Bleu*, at a very young age, a much earlier age than children would read it now. I was completely spellbound. It fascinated me and nourished my imagination, but more importantly it scared me. In reality the real-life Lord Bluebeard [Gilles de Rais] was a complete ogre," she continues. "It always amazed me that, at one time, someone like this monster actually lived. But there are people like this still around today. The story of the antebellum serial killer paedophile is an old one, but it is not out of place in today's society. It deserves to be retold."

As such, *Bluebeard* is not just an interpretation of a classic French folktale but a poisonous fairy tale shaded with autobiographical references – the film's central sibling twosome, Marie-Catherine and Anne, are unequivocal reincarnations of Breillat and her younger sister, Marie-Anne – and tinged with contemporary cultural nuance. Transparently, of course, *Bluebeard* represents something of a departure for Breillat, but with another Perrault tale, *Sleeping Beauty*, in his sights, it can hardly be regarded as an anomaly.

So what inspired Breillat to awaken her passion for fairy tales at this juncture in her career? "I think there's a complicity to fairy tales that is subtle yet profound, perhaps even so with the work of Perrault than [Hans Christian] Andersen," she says. "For a long time I've wanted to explore the idea that childhood can be never ending, that it can be infinite, but in life you get to a point." Breillat pauses, hesitating pensively before exhaling softly.

Although Breillat admits to having recovered emotionally from the severe stroke that left her partially paralysed down her left side in 2004, it's the scar left by a more recent trauma that is proving less quick to heal. In 2006 Breillat was caught up in an embalmment scam supposedly carried out by the actor she had cast to star in her upcoming film, *Red Love*. As a result, Breillat, who was once loved for her fearless persona, now sits a notably widowed figure, although there's still a glint of rebellion that speaks to life as she reveals her own plot for retaliation. "I'm actually writing a book about what happened," she says. "It's about how easily people can be betrayed and hurt, and I'm going to call it *Album of the Damned*. If I decide to make it into a film? Let's say, *Nyx*."

For a filmmaker who's suffered far greater hardships in the autumn of her career than throughout her wilderness years, such a could-demonstrate certainly carries an air of poignancy. But more than this, it marks Breillat as an artist whose dedication to her craft suggests that, in spite of personal anguish, she's not about to give up the ghost, just yet.

Check out the full transcript online.



BLUEBEARD



The centuries-old tale of a repulsive but rich sexual killer who keeps the bodies of his former wives in a locked chamber, *Bluebeard* wouldn't be pillaged by Disney even if it was the last fairy tale on the shelf. For literary-minded feminists, though, it's the myth that keeps us going—whether you're brushing up on your Angela Carter or tying yourself in knots trying to unravel Joanna Newman's latest triple album. That makes it ideal fodder for agent provocateur Catherine Breillat. And, because it's Breillat, more of psychosocial and Freudian mind-fuckery, she simplifies the Reginald-catholiconed fable by throwing abling reality into the mix.

Somewhere in seventeenth-century France, two school-age sisters are left powerless following their father's death. While mother sees about dying, their whole wardrobe black, and the elder sister weeps at the bedside of a sick, young Marie-Catherine (Flo-

Catton) ferociously determines she'll live like a noble one day. And when word gets out that the world's least eligible bachelor is on the market again, she soon gains her wish.

At first glance, this is a deceptively simple retelling. Shot on low-fi digital, the film has a budget feel and the deliberately ripped-down aesthetic and clipped dialogue suggest Breillat is sticking close to Charles Perrault's original text, which barely fills three pages. At a lean 40 minutes, economical in both plotting and characterization, and lacking any of the overt sexual explicitness for which Breillat is known, *Bluebeard* is a model of restraint where The Last Minutes—her previous and, to date, only other period film—was a comet fit to burst.

That's mostly Breillat screwing with our heads, though, since, despite its apparent austerity, the film contains sexual images and stylized tableaux, all with scores of their own to tell. She begins

on the twitching death throes of a decapitated first, prefigures the film's climactic scenes with the spectacle of a lunar eclipse, and ends there with a perfectly composition halfway between *Caro* and *Cosmo*.

She also focuses her ability *Bluebeard* (Dominique Thomas, looking less oge and more misandromed comb-over) and his tiny but equally glorious pubescent bride with sitting, almost comical, little-and-large gestures. *Bluebeard*—on observing he's too big to pass through the doorway into Marie-Catherine's chamber (is it really on screen as it sounds on paper)—becomes, like the viewer, quickly aware that the monster has met his match.

This idea of formidable innocence is played out in a haunting scene in which two young seventeenth-century sisters, named Catherine and Marie-Anne (and apparently dressed in Breillat and her sister's own

childhood clothes), read the Perrault story together in a dusty attic. Adding comic relief as well as layers of complexity, Breillat coaches hilariously not-so-naïve performances from the pair—especially younger actress Mouton Lapeyrie, who, with the brilliantly funny logic of a self-assured five-year-old, seems so confident dragging that when two people get married they become heterosexual. Their playful but loaded dialogue sets a tone which, true to the spirit of fairy tales, is as enigmatic as it is eye-opening. Apparently Sleeping Beauty is next on Breillat's list—thank heaven for little girls' tales. *Sophie Hren*

Anticipation. Breillat does one more film. What's later for us? **B**

Equipment. Cinemas, comic and dancing. So vintage Breillat. **B**

In Bedroom. A toping head-scratcher with about 400 to 500. **B**



GAINSBOURG (VIE HEROÏQUE)

GAINSBOURG
VIE HEROÏQUE
10/11

10/11

Adapting his own graphic novel on the life of legendary charmer Serge Gainsbourg, Joann Sfar brings a poetical sensibility to the big screen. The result is a film that assumes wild flights of imagination while stumbling badly when it comes to narrative, context and dramatic pacing.

Serge Gainsbourg, exiled from France for three decades. He spent his formative years as a frustrated artist before finding success as a singer/songwriter. In the mid '60s, collaborations with then "yéyé" star France Gall brought Gainsbourg a level of wealth, fame and notoriety that led to the rest of his life. Troublemaker, provocateur and controversialist. By the time he died from a heart attack in 1991, Gainsbourg had earned the companionship of Baudelaire that accompanied his legend.

With so much ground to cover

in 130 minutes, Sfar needs to exercise a judicious eye for vigour. Instead, he's attempted to cram as much onscreen as possible. And so a linear path is set, winding its way through Gainsbourg's childhood as a cocky Jewish kid in Occupied France, taking piano lessons from a domineering but taking more interest in the comic creations of his sketchbook. It's here that the seeds of a subversive nature are sown, as little Lucien Gainsbourg proudly displays his yellow star, shows duty poems for his schoolmates, and seduces women twice his age.

There are the film's freshest scenes: in which young actor Kacey Mottel Klein evokes an extraordinary charm. It's also where Sfar introduces us to a crude or break alyric punk. Despite his playboy reputation, as an adult Gainsbourg was always haunted by the implications of his

Jewishness, both in the complex manner it conformed on him, and in the physical manifestation that was his "mug" - that uniquely misbegotten beauty both cruelly arrogant and irresistible. This internal debasement is represented by a gaunt, comical Jewish face that appears at key emotional moments, and later by a head-locked ghost chattering temptation in his ear.

This is a bold piece of metaphorical dramatisation, but elsewhere Sfar's come-back sensibility does Gainsbourg no favours. His grip on the film's narrative trajectory is tenuous, and with little or no time for contextualisation, anybody who isn't already conversant with the singer's biography will soon feel lost in a roll call of songs and scenes that prove bewildering. It's and Sfar, alongside editor Maylene Montheux, has constructed the film as a series of

comic-book panels. But the gaps between film scenes can't be filled by the viewer's own creative leaps.

The adult Gainsbourg is convincingly embodied by Ben El-Mechaieq - all cigarette smokes and crocodile eyes. As Brigitte Bardot and Jane Birkin respectively, both Léaune Cossé and Lucy Gerdon (who tragically committed suicide shortly after the film was completed) provide the sexual fireworks required of them. But the film itself goes off with a whamper: **Mart Bochoud**

Antidote: France's high priest of cool gets an unusual looking boy. **B**

Delight: Great performances and brilliant ideas but something's a little right. **B**

In Retrospect: Gainsbourg deserves all about it, but casual viewers may find themselves frustrated. **B**

CITY ISLAND

SHOOTING: JULY 1-10, 2014
LOCATION: NEW YORK

REUNION

Welcome to City Island, a little-known fishing enclave in the Bronx. Here resides Vince Russo (Andy Garcia) and family – his highly-strung wife, Joyce (Lithuanian Marge), his peevish teenage son (Ollie), his newcomer son (Sam Miller) and college-student daughter (and life offspring) (Domack Garcia-Londo).

On the surface, life seems simple. In Vince's world, everyone falls into one of two categories – those who were born and lived on City Island (fishing jiggers) and those who move there (muscle-suckers). He has a solid day job as a Corrections Officer and when in his beachfront house are taking along nicely (they dip a toe in the



water and the current of secrets and lies beneath will pull you under.

An embarrassed Vince attends acting classes under the guise of police games. Here he meets Molly (Emily Mortimer) to whom he must confess his biggest secret – he has a grown-up son, Tony (Steven Seagal) who has not only turned up at Vince's garage, but is soon allowed into his care.

In a world where the whole family smokes on the fly, the identity of the new resident is, of course, kept secret, which leads to all kinds

of surprises. Add to this Joyce's hunch that police are uninterested for an affair, his teenage son's lanky-nerd obsession with an overweight neighbor and his beloved daughter's secret career as a stripper, and you've got one tense family ready to blow.

Director Raymond De Felma handles the characters with wit and grace, and while the emotions are raw, the laughs come thick and fast. Garcia in particular brings a vulnerable charm rarely seen elsewhere in his work, and the rest

of the cast give strong performances in what is a touching, character-driven comedy that's a true breath of fresh air. **Kat Holwood**

Anticipation: Garcia as the grandfather of a family comedy? Essential viewing. **D**

Enjoyment: Between loads of laughter and a few true-joking moments, you'll be rooting for all the Russos. **B**

In Bedtime: Caught up as one of the best indie films in years. Warm, sensitive and funny. **B**

DOWN TERRACE

SHOOTING: JULY 1-10, 2014
LOCATION: NEW YORK

REUNION

The events of *Down Terrace* are regularly punctuated by interludes showing the day of the week in bold capitals. They fit in perfectly with the film's quotidian concerns, as a family's kitchen sink dramas are played out in a Brighton terrace house resound in cups of tea, salt of Duff, repairs and occasional visits from friends and associates. Anyone who has seen *The String* knows that such minor-time matters can also serve as a signifier of approaching (and underlying) horror – and so it is that this set-up will soon be accommodating violence, betrayal and cold-blooded murder.

Bill (Robert Hill), Maggie (Julie Doolan) and their 34-year-old son Karl (Robert's son, son Robert Hill, who also co-wrote and edited) may seem like an ordinary family, but there is only because, as Bill puts it, they "can't be too conspicuous." Bill,



you see, heads the local chapter of a crime syndicate. But someone's been talking to the police, so Bill, with his wife as chief advisor and occasional enforcer, sets about identifying and eliminating the informant in their ranks. Meanwhile Karl – engaged to Vidla (Kerry Foxcock) and soon to be a father himself – wants out, but the blood in this family runs very thick, and as Karl unearths some well-buried home truths, he looks set to continue the very legacy that he longs to sever.

From *The Godfather* to *The Sopranos*, crime and family have

long made compelling bedfellows, but in his low-budget feature debut, Ben Wheatley brings a very English working-class blend of domestic brutality to his evil, doing for the gangster flick what *Seven*, *Shall I Marry?* and *Dad* did for marital horror. It is a tragedy but also very funny, shocking and utterly mesmerizing – though the seething tensions are always palpable even if the violence is largely kept out of the frame. Isn't that how it is with most close-knit clans?

A British crime film that is refreshingly free not just of cliché but (broadly) of action itself.

Down Terrace offers an ensemble of believably comradely characters divided between their commitments to work and family, and then observes from its darkly comic distance as they all try to kill one another – in the family way. **Andrew Barker**

Anticipation: Great last women's festival prize. **D**

Enjoyment: Evil has rarely been so intensely lovely. **B**

In Bedtime: Last night's nap that didn't happen. The kitchen sink scene alone confounds genius. **B**



THE CONCERT

WILDE **WILSON**
LAURENT plays the role of
the lost girl in a Paris

STORY

The Concert is yet another Russian film set in clearly remembered history, but there isn't a scrap of awe here. Indeed, it delights in revealing the blasé absurdities that lie behind the pretence of power.

The film's protagonist is Andrii Plapov (Adrien Guibert), an impoverished, careworn junior in Moscow's grand Bolshoi Ballet. Bullied and humiliated, and with a few loose minutes, he looks close to bankruptcy. But beneath the worn-out clothes, the long, dusty hair and the sooping subservience lies a gentle, brotherly elegance. That man was once something more.

We first meet him invisibly conducting an orchestra from the back of a great concert hall and quickly learn that 25 years ago he was a virtuoso of the same theatre, a world-renowned master of Tchaikovsky and, finally for his career, an avowed supporter

of Jewish musicians, despite Brezhnev's decree.

One day, while clearing the bow's office, he intercepts a fax from the Théâtre du Châtelet noting the Bolshoi Orchestra's *en Passé*. In this piece of paper, Andrii sees a shot at redemption. He will organize his own orchestra, go to Paris and become the fabled conductor of Tchaikovsky once more. And while there, he will seek out the celebrated French violinist Anne-Marie Jacques (Mélodie Laurent) and ask her to play for him. After, we're not sure why, and we're encouraged to forget as we are swept up in the madcap swarming from Red Square to the Champs-Élysées.

The Concert rests on a paradox so gross it need not be overtly explored: Soviet Russia, despite expending 20 million roubles in the Second World War, remained a deeply anti-Semitic state. Auschwitz will forever resonate with the

Holocaust, but the gulags of Siberia were its heir.

To its credit, the film is neither a perceptive screen nor an acerbic satire. Rather, it's an unrelenting screwball comedy with great swathes of melodrama. Director Radu Mihailescu has made every effort to nail his film with a sense of the absurd: from macabre scenes and ironic editing to concentrated comradery and performances that wear towards the camp.

This unabashed comedy of manners is nevertheless, deeply flawed. Potentially there's a snapshot of earnest energy, like a nervous stand-up comic with over-rehearsed jokes. Usually it's excessively slapdash, rarely pausing for breath. Much of the delivery is so over the top it feels laboured, falling to apocryphal that good laughs are born of restraint. As *The Concert* progresses, it begins to cling ever

more desperately to the dissonance of its central punning.

Méliès once owns his acting director's drink, because they have saved this film. Méliès Laurent is an actress who can convey any range of emotion through the slightest variations of expression. Despite a small role, she owns the camera. The final sequence, in which she is moved to tears while leading the orchestra conducted by Andrii, is such an elevating, transcendent resolution that all other shortcomings are immediately excused. In her face, lost dreams can be found again. **Tom Scrymgeour**

Anticipation. Gail: a good heaving as a witty embrace comedy. **1**

Delivered. Méliès's moments are by late-breaking and treasure. **2**

In Retrospect. The strength of classical music is the final sequence is a fair rising. **3**

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SHREK FOREVER AFTER

IT'S A FRODO-BAGGINS-ESQUE
TO FAR, FAR AWAY

As the final installment of the Shrek franchise lurches into view—a looming shadow now cast in three dimensions—the overwhelming response is one of relief. That is, the end of the line for a genre that ran out of steam remarkably quickly after that under-jest original.

As Shrek broke box office records, the subsequent swarms that made it such a breath of fresh air were buried beneath an avalanche of dailies. What began as an angry riposte to the Disney money-franchise became the biggest show in town, and as that post-birth pattern and progeny must become finally domesticated.

So it is a credit to the writing of Josh Klausner and Darren Lemke that by the time the final curtain falls on *Shrek Forever After*, this early retel has turned into nostalgia. Because somewhere between here and *Far Far Away* they've rediscovered Shrek's magic: returning the puffy green joke to his roots, stripping him of baggage and giving him something, at last, worth fighting for.

They do this without sidestepping the master plan: it is essence to recapitulate the plot of the first and last film as Shrek once more has to save the kingdom from a pre-stored megatronic, convince the cursed Princess Fiona to fall in love with him, make friends with a talking donkey and defeat a fire-breathing dragon. All this because he made a deal with the devil—disappeared as Rumpelstiltskin—after throwing a hay to his children's birthday party and washing away his messy new life.

Before you know it, Shrek has never been born. Fiona never met her Prince Charming, the kingdom is in ruins and the palace has been turned into a 1980s Miami disco.

Shrek's efforts to rectify his mistake and regain the life he so blithely tossed away are his dashed into the age resistance, haunted by that dead-end mission, the Pied Piper, and misadventure with old friends in unlikely circumstances.

And misadventure, too, with his old chums. Like the first film, *Shrek Forever After* has the air of an animation conceived by and for adults, with the odd gag thrown in to keep the kids happy. There are some bold ideas bubbling beneath the surface, not least in the unending portrait of lonely life, the frustration of parenthood and the unrelenting proximity between violence and domesticity as seen in Fiona's new guise as a warrior queen.

It is, more simply, a re-energizing adventure that manages to breathe up the format considerably while still paying homage to all the characters that have made the series so successful: with Puss in Boots' expanded presence a particular highlight. DreamWorks have also produced one of the few films that genuinely benefits from being in 3D. The Shrek series has always boasted colorful visuals but with an added dimension to play with, *Forever After* plays and speaks with added visuality.

Obviously inspired by *A Wonderful Life*, Shrek may not be able to match Frank Capra's delicious pathos, but this is a strong final chapter for the franchise. **Matt Boschenko**

Anticipation. That original Shrek is a distant memory. At least this is the last one. **C**

Stipulation. Gorgeous visuals and a story that perfectly blends the trash and the tender. **D**

To Reassure. A real surprise but it won't leave you waiting more. **C**

FRANÇOIS OZON: RESTLESS AUTEUR INTERVIEW BY MARTYN CONTERIO

SELECT FILMOGRAPHY FRANÇOIS OZON

The Refuge (2001)
Angel (2005)
Five to Seven (2007)
Soif (2008)
Demolished (2009)
À l'œuvre (2010)
Winter Sleepers (forthcoming 2013)
Minotaur (2015)
It Was (2015)
See You See You (2017)

Being led through the *mélancholique* as the brutal François with its cast-iron apron, staircase, wooden desks and high shelves, and walking through a recently moved door into a dark passageway in all very dark and dagger. It's possible the strangest rule is ridiculous with anybody, let alone filmmaker François Ozon.

Now 42-year-old, Ozon was once described as the earliest terrible of French cinema after two outrageous films — *Scream* and *Cultural Lovers* — established his credentials and blazing talent. Those expecting the provocations to get worse were soon disappointed. The unconventional marriage bed of surrealism, satire and sex soon gave way to a less outlandish and more intimate direction which saw him aligned critically with online du couple and winning adoration outside his native France.

Ozon works at a pace to match the film of Woody Allen and Michael Winterbottom, producing one film per year. The highly camp musical *À l'œuvre* remains his biggest hit, but *Soif* and *Five to Seven* are widely his most popular to date. Not bad for a career that's far from over.

His calling card is the great fluctuation between light and dark subject matter, often in the same film. In *The Refuge*, the idea was to begin in the darkness and to go to the light and something sweeter. It's joy following the journey of my characters. For me it's always important not to be in the same mood and to follow an evolution," he says.

Over the past decade, Ozon has flirted with a whole variety of genres and styles. He's worked with everybody, from screen legends Catherine Deneuve and Isabelle Huppert to the bright young things of French film such as Ludine Sogard and Meli Poupaud. Asked where he sees himself in the grand scheme of French cinema, he comments: "I know now I have a place. For a long time I think it was difficult to accept me. As a young director, it's always difficult to arrive in French cinema and be accepted. Now I think I have a place. I don't really know where it is because I don't have the distance to see."

The *Refuge* even has investigating themes of motherhood, drug addiction and love. He's not used to exposing grand emotions, yet coaxes them with a softer effect. There is a quiet and delicate spirit present that comes very naturally to the director. "I wanted to begin the film in a very melodramatic way," he reveals. "It's a big shock, it's violent and, after, you go somewhere else. The story is suddenly less dramatic and more contemplative."

Ozon decided to push realism to extraordinary lengths in casting Isabelle Carré during her real-life pregnancy. "It was an old idea to make a film with a pregnant actress," he explains. "So when I found out Isabelle Carré was

pregnant I prepared to make a film about her pregnancy and she said 'yes.' She didn't know what it would be like to be pregnant and act."

Well aware of the challenges in choosing the delicate path, Ozon readily acknowledges the issue. "We had to adapt ourselves to the rhythm of Isabelle. We shot for three weeks in the summer when she was really pregnant. Six months after she gave birth we shot the beginning and the end. It was difficult to shoot by night and too early in the morning, so we adapted ourselves. It wasn't complicated because we had a very low budget and small crew."

There is always an array of aesthetic and narrative experimentation involved in Ozon's work — he is one auteur who does not repeat himself. "There are some directors who always make the same film and the same story," he says. "For me, there are some things between all the films and little too, but I like to challenge myself and go in whatever direction, to try something in new-ecology or new style. I make one film a year so I don't want to feel it's the same thing. It's always excited by something new."

The ending of *The Refuge* stands with his very best, most beautiful scenes. He orchestrates a moving finale that describes the seamless feeling of cinema while delivering an emotional wallop. Ozon admits to having experimented several times to achieve the desired effect based on his instincts and a sense of justice to his characters. "The people who read the script were very shocked. For me, it was clear. Maurice is not ready to become a mother. People thought it was a very aggressive ending and I didn't want that. So I had the idea of her writing a letter. I didn't know whether I would keep it or not because the moment is very long. When I was behind the camera I kept saying, 'Look at me! I think it worked!'"

He confesses an unintentional distance once he's finished a production. One would expect Ozon to treat his films as if they were his offspring, but he godly dismisses such notions. "To make a film is such a long process, at the end it's happy when it's finished. If you turned to me and said, 'This is your worst film, it's terrible,' I wouldn't care. For me it's an old story, it's no more my child. I don't watch my old films either."

Next up for Ozon, true to form, is a more light-hearted effort with Gérard Depardieu and Catherine Deneuve, entitled *Phélie*. After the heavy subject matter of *The Refuge*, he faced making a comedy. Reluctantly for a director, he has no grand plans or dream projects — "No more dreams, please," he laughs — but would be tempted to make a film in England any day. "I would love to because I enjoyed making *Angel* so much. I'd love to find the right story. I don't want to film in English just for the sake of it."



THE REFUGE

by Dave Karger

Pierre-Olivier Once sets himself a challenge in his latest film by taking cinema du corps to new heights, *The Refuge* is credited on the mid-hipnagogy of actress Isabelle Carré, with the director swooping it around a narrative involving heroin addiction, lost love and the grieving process.

Mousse (Carré), having overdosed on smack with her boyfriend Louis (Mélis Poupaud), wakes in a hospital bed to find that the love of her life is dead and she is with child. But from destructive acts spring new life and new chances to take. In an episodic narrative, Mousse revolts against the idea she must abort the pregnancy and storms off to a villa in the South of France.

Oneskill is intimate and celebratory yet opens about this transformative experience, with plenty of close-ups and lingering

shots fixed on Carré's ever-expanding stomach in a variety of poses and positions, some belabored and erotic.

The opening and closing acts are set in shiny Paris with the first scenes gritty and uncomfortable for anybody apart from about needles. Mousse and Louis search each other's bodies for veins that haven't yet collapsed. It's established right away that they are the elite side of the Parisian middle class but also people devoted to one another, united by love and addiction.

Mélis Poupaud's presence is little more than a cameo. (Does Carré have something against him? He's killed her twice now.) Yet such is his familiarity and likability as a known actor, once he's gone, he's very much missed. It is a smart casting choice on the director's part.

The liturgical but riotous middle act takes place in picture-

perfect France: a world not unlike Carré's *Swimming Pool*. It is here that Mousse develops a close yet quarantous relationship with Louis' brother Paul (Louis-Romain Chelly).

Mousse is, on the surface, a very sympathetic figure. Carré challenges the audience with the action she possesses not one iota of maternal instinct, but she might in time. She quells methadone like there's no tomorrow and acts the spoilt brat, but Carré masterfully peels out the character underneath. By the film's beautifully staged final scene, set on a Métro train, she addresses the audience directly via voiceover. It is an exquisite, purely cinematic moment.

The director is laser on exploring the cycles of life and death—what James Joyce called the "communion of death" in *Pinnocchio White*.

As Paul acknowledges during his brother's eulogy, "He who dies will one day rise." The baby is a continuation of Louis, and Mousse does not have to struggle alone as Paul is there to help.

Once's *cinéma confidentiel* are all present and correct. We get scenes at the beach, sexual tension between characters, sarcastic or deadpan dialogue and clever aesthetic experimentation. The madcap surrealism of *Crieland Lovers* and *Steam* may be long gone now, but he remains one of the most admirable French directors working today. **Martyn Gonsky**

Reception: *Piercing* Carré home up with her job Carré's *Impulse*. **B**

Reception: *Experimental* *Fanny Sander* *Quintessential* *Car*. **B**

In Retrospect: The director is back in film. **B**



WHEN YOU'RE STRANGE

BY JEFF LABRECQUE

When You're Strange
Directed by Jim Morrison
R

In the fallout from the Cuban Missile Crisis, the winds of change sent a steady breeze across America. Fueled by the fading promise of the American Dream, the potency of the Civil Rights Movement and the nightmare of the Vietnam War, four disillusioned musicians would capture the zeitgeist of the emerging youth counterculture and change the shape of America's musical landscape.

In just six short years between 1965 and 1971, The Doors overtook a governmental shift of atomic proportions. When *You're Strange* stands alone as a rare and fitting eulogy to this ill-fated quartet, Swan-diving into a psychedelic mélange of free love and LSD to the tune of the band's breakthrough hit "Light My Fire," writer/director Tom DiCillo doesn't so much invite you back to the decade as throw you into it. It's an uncompromising

technique, but the deeper DiCillo takes you, the more palpable the film's authenticity becomes.

Chronicle the group's whirlwind transition from garage band obscurity to stadium-filling megastardom, the film eschews tilting head retrospection, bringing The Doors' anarchic collision of black jazz and Rhodes-driven rock 'n' roll to life in lovingly compiled montage snippets. Yet while previously unseen archive material and a vibrant aesthetic helps ground the film continually, DiCillo can't resist splattering flicks of idiosyncratic sentimentality onto the canvas. As a heavily cocaine-fueled tour through a cultural revolution, the director's delicious pacing and over-the-top rhetoric are indulgent to a fault, but Johnny Dapp's commanding, solemn baritone is harmoniously counteractive.

Like Oliver Stone's 1991 biopic, *When You're Strange* inevitably accentuates the messianic force of frontman Jim Morrison. But unlike Stone, DiCillo never seeks to ingratiate himself with Doors disciples. Letting rare live footage and backstage interviews tell it like it was, the director remains a chad somewhere between fan and documentarian. As a result, *When You're Strange* is a film that dispels the myth of the surrounding the band, honoring the raw artistic prowess of John Densmore, Robby Krieger and Ray Manzarek, and accurately depicting Morrison as both frail poet and unshored acrobat.

Like his contemporaries Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, at just 27 Morrison paid the ultimate price for his dizzying rise to fame. Accordingly, the band's legacy was always bound to be obscured by the shadow of its self-styled "Lizard

King." When *You're Strange* may thus inevitably be Morrison's film, but few men have witnessed their own voice resonate so profoundly, and a more objective film may well suffer from downplaying his influence.

While the old adage says those who remember the '60s weren't really there, *When You're Strange* restores the spirit of the decade in a way that is at once intimate and universally familiar. **A-Adam Woodward**

Anticipation: As yet finalized the poster tags of risk-rock psychedelia. Let's receive judgments. **B**

Enjoyment: Like *The Doors*, an intimate as a cult, when *You're Strange* is self-indulgent but impossible to resist. **A**

In the Spotlight: Inspiring and infectious you'll find in the 60s groove even if you weren't there. **B**

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IVUL



REVIEW

The second instalment is a pointed telling by artist and filmmaker Andrew Kötting. *Just* marks the director's successful return to full-length narrative features following almost a decade of work on a series of diverse multi-media projects. It is an interestingly distinctive and distinguished work that deftly blends the avant-garde, high-art performance and assured storytelling.

A family drama in which the close relationship between teenage siblings Alex (the remarkable Jacob Aussemou, a trained acrobat) and older sister Freya (Jail Adélaïde Lessau) increases to such an intensity that it develops sexual overtones, the film examines the repercussions of the

discovery of the transgression by the domineering head of the family.

Just pits (played with a mix of gruffness and visible likability by leading French character actor Jean-Luc Bideau) barnabas Alex, demanding that he never sets foot on his land again. The boy takes the drastic literally, clambering to the roof before diving out an entrance in the terrace close to his former home. From that vantagepoint, Alex witnesses the gradual disintegration of his father's health, his mother Marie's gestures towards infidelity, and subsequently the slow death of his parents' marriage.

Relocating to the French Pyrenees after UK funding fell through, the French-language *Just* is infused with an otherworldly

sensibility that lends it an intoxicating, magnetic feel. Eisinger, who joins a recent band of leftfield British filmmakers including Peter Strickland, Ben Hopkins and Thomas Clay who have plied their trade abroad, is known for his tendency towards sonic and visual experimentation, and incorporating archive footage to compelling effect.

Unlike previous work, however, the concentration here is upon narrative thrust and the subtle revelation of tensions within the flawed but fascinating family unit. Closely informed by Philip Toner's *On a Tree* and the *Sludgehammer*, the film assumes a characteristic confronting of landscape that's also reminiscent

of Werner Herzog. The baroque elements in all this variety – harsh, unforgiving and tranquil – are beautifully foregrounded in the frame and acutely incorporated into *Just*'s very fabric and texture. Ambitious, challenging and yet also accessible, this is Kötting's most sensory and purely satisfying feature to date. **Jason Wood**

Anticipation. A new feature feature from one of the UK's most distinctive and original talents. **B**

Delight. Kötting has produced a tender, poignant and affecting look at family dynamics. **B**

In It's Spirit. One of the finest British films of the year. **A**



THE REBOUND

by Dave Karger

THE REBOUND
Catherine Keener
Justin Bertha
R. Lee Ely

From the disquieting female swooshers of *He's Just Not That Into You* to the raucous re-creation of the old mad trope in *27 Dresses* and *Leap Year*, the self-flagellating rom-com heroine has been systematically disemboweled by her own canine art. Which is why *The Rebound*, a neighborhood rom whose premise triumphantly disrupts the genre's regressive gender politics, proves such a welcome addition to the canon.

In an unexpectedly charismatic return to the big screen, Catherine Zeva-Jones plays nearly single mother Sandy, who starts a life in New York after the discovery that her controlling husband has been having an affair. Following

a string of calamitous dates with men her own age, Sandy finds herself increasingly drawn to baby-sitter Aram (Justin Bertha), a natural with her children—and 15 years her junior.

Though the premise is hardly original, *Sandy and Aram*'s relationship achieves a unique progressiveness by engaging wholeheartedly (if crudely) with the landscape of gender politics at its most modern. Formerly a stay-at-home mother in the suburbs, Sandy's move to the city allows her to embark upon a career at a sports network, while Aram, young and disoriented, becomes the primary provider of child care. The arrangement dignifies Sandy's phantasmagoric

husband and permits her best friend—but on the whole it is a successful and unclouded one for those directly involved.

In another welcome slap in the face of convention, the couple's romance is noteworthy for focusing on heroine's escape from an unhappy marriage, here portrayed as an emancipation story with duplicity and disappointment. Sandy begins entrenched in suburban convention, but ends unattached, autonomous and successful—a refreshing inversion that places the film in joyful contrast with the marriage-driven teleologies of the rom-com back catalogue.

But, of course, *The Rebound* lacks without its flaws. For all

the realism of its romance, the narrative is disappointingly short of memorable comedy, and what gaps there are invite more a groan than a grin. Emerging from the rubble largely unscathed is a spunky Zeva-Jones, full of capable gusto and spirited charm. Though one can't help thinking the role of an empowered, back-to-school-swelling in her story may have been better suited to someone with less focus. **Emma Peterson**

Anticipation. The promotional poster appears to promise a landscape-based romp. **A**

Enjoyment. Inspires hope for a new era of feminist, friendly rom-coms. **B**

In Retrospect. Catherine, we salute you. **B**

GOEMON

BRITISH
COLUMBIA
1998

PG-13

An extravagant and occasionally fun martial arts epic, *Goemon* also overreaches in trying to be all things to all men, like a puppet put together from 10 different acts.

Located half-a-century ago in battle-ravaged Japan, the film follows feuding warlords as they betray and double-cross each other with the help of highly trained renge assassins. Among them is Goemon (*Yusaku Kikuchi*), a master thief with a mysterious past. He has no problem jumping hundreds of feet in the air, running up walls, dancing along rooftops and defeating hordes of hundreds of enemies in a matter of seconds, but when he finds out the secret behind an ancient feud old grudges are renewed, Goemon



is drawn into the past he wanted to leave behind and... Well, everything else you'll no doubt hear in the voiceover for the trailer.

Visually the film is strange and unsettling. There's a *Final Fantasy* vibe to the CGI action scenes, as director Kazuaki Koyasu takes a highly stylized, deliberately non-realistic approach. The colours are bright and bold, bursting out of the screen like a *Lichtenstein* painting in action scenes that with the energy and pace of the *Pearlman* bull run.

This is where Goemon reveals itself as a strange cinema - never knowing quite what it wants to be. At over two hours it certainly tries to tell a far-reaching and complex story, but it stumbles willy-nilly in approach and subject matter - from the serious (battleside, political machinations) to the ridiculous (the whole running up walls thing, child-like dialogues). Even with archetypal characters and a classic formula, the plot is often difficult to follow, as contemporary

politics is mixed in with generations of allegiances and grudges. Then just as it's about to make sense, the martial arts turn Goemon back into an episode of *Polemon*, and it all falls apart. **Jonathan Wilkins**

Anticipation: A sleeping martial arts epic from the director of the totally nuts *Graveyard Book*. **B**

Biggest: This is his kids' right? Not, just his baby doll? **C**

In Retrospect: It's all too much for one film. **D**

TOY STORY 3

PG-13

WALT DISNEY
PICTURES
1999

There's not much Pixar gets wrong, dabbling up films that are both technologically impressive and choc'full of soul, story and character. Their latest ventures have even braved the nasty complexities of life, death and relationships with heart-wrenching success. However, with *Toy Story 3* we're back on dangerously familiar territory: revisiting the characters that made them famous, the Pixar gang needs to do something special if they're not to be outdone by their own success.

We return to the action with owner Andy all grown up and preparing to leave for college. Relinquished to the storage box, Woody and friends find themselves inadvertently donated to the local day care centre, and so



begins their quest to head back home. With villains in the shape of an overgrown baby and a bear that smells of cannibals, Pixar have definitely injected the truth back into the formula, but where *Up* really did have something for everyone, *Toy Story 3* adheres strictly to kids-only conventions.

At least Pixar haven't been distracted by ID. As well as being visually stunning, *Toy Story 3* will boast acutely observed humour alongside the nuanced detail

and emotional warmth that have always been the hallmarks of their winning. Certainly the technology hasn't been used as an excuse for lazy narrative tricks.

It's more that a film that survives more than one iteration with integrity intact. It's never still that it does so when it has guaranteed burns on seats and a stupendous amount of cash in the offering. And yet the *Toy Story* brand hasn't succumbed to a pile 'em high, sell 'em cheap mentality. Inevitably the premise has lost some of its sparkle

but with the dialogue sharp and the voice performances charismatic, *Toy Story 3* is a satisfying if not surprising throwback to old friends. **Adam Baine**

Anticipation: They're back back as film but can Pixar really get even sillier like *Toy Story*? **B**

Biggest: In word, yes. Pixar's pride that has worked to magic. **B**

In Retrospect: By their high standards this isn't the best, but by anyone else's it's close to perfection. **B**

BAARIA

REVIEW

BAARIA
 Giuseppe Tornatore
 1997, 110 min., R

Director Giuseppe Tornatore will always be remembered for, and perhaps constrained by, his greatest work. *Cinema Paradiso*. Certainly *Baaria* is no match for it. Though Tornatore's camera soars across the landscape to Ennio Morricone's moving score, or delving into elaborately ornate scenes of village life, this film with no ending, simply can't justify its two-and-a-half-hour runtime.

In a small Sicilian village in pre-war fascist Italy, mischievous youngster Peppino (played as a child by the oddily blank Giovanni Gombosi, and as an adult by the excellent Francesco Schiavone) grows up loving his father's secret soldiers to the amusement of the

imposed fascist townfolk, spurred on by an insatiable sense of how his crumbling world should be. Peppino rumbles into politics, joins the communists, and begins a lifelong battle for the rights of the poor—at the expense of his family's financial wellbeing.

The peace of narrative becomes apparent as the love story between the mourning Marianna (Margherita Molloy) and the unrepentant Peppino begins to drag around the hour mark, at which

point unwise symbolism comes to the fore—a fly trapped inside a spinning top, a small boy running an errand that stretches over generations of time. Tornatore's interest appears to lie in these details, creating stunning tableaux and a vivid, towering picture of life as it was then. But set against those magnificent, majestic scenes, the characters are frustratingly shallow. It is heartbreaking that such visual mastery and epic ambition should result in a film with so very little

emotion in its breast. **Andrew Hubert**

Anticipation: *Rings* is always as high that the director of *Cinema Paradiso* has produced another timeless gem. **D**

Enjoyment: Those scripting sentimentally scripts and great beauty will not be disappointed. Those expecting a compelling narrative will. **D**

In Retrospect: One cannot call a film as amazing as this before, but it has surpassed *Cine* could have been so very much more. **D**

SEPARADO!

SEPARADO!
 Brian Koppelman
 1997, 90 min., R

The Super Furry Animals were, for a time, part of a select group of acts painted provincial soul. But had cerebral reverence. Pulp had cool blazers and sex. Supergrass had sideburns and Gaudi ribs and his hand of ruffles had their machine melodies shot through a psychedelic time warp.

But as middle-age beatniks it's time for *Rings* to figure out what to do with the second half of his life before rock is still there here up and spin him out. Enter the Film Agency for Wales.

Repeatedly five years in the making, and the recipient of multiple re-edits, *Separado!* meets the world to a re-racing of *Rings*' family tree—"for family tree, as my sister Beryl called it."

Of particular interest is *Pine*



Griffith, a dense relative and *Paisanismo* design who lived. Little American rhythms with traditional Celtic ballads. *Rings* sets out to track him down, providing a part road movie, part magical journey tour across the barren archipelago of Argentina, playing with various local musicians along the way.

Rings has tried to make the resulting film with the same whimsy as his music, but despite the low-fi aesthetics, the trippy shots, the Peckinpah subtitles and spaghetti western stylings, it is still

shocked by the habitual findings of celebrity music TV.

For all its conceptual departures, *Separado!* is narrated by a man who spent his recent days interviewing with NME, and it shows in the movie's intellectual depth. Louche means might work when accepting a Brit Award, but for an 80-minute feature doc, it's a soporific approach. As *Rings* shuffles around in his aviators, long curls and bubble hair, wandering on his guitar and stumbling away in his thick Welsh vowels, the company

of Anne Robinson seems suddenly more appalling.

The *Pure* in best name was "The Man Don't Give A F---" *Separado!* is something like a protest that unfolds with an extra layer of significance. **Tom Geismar**

Anticipation: Bringing down the *Pollies* a spirit of *The Flying Laps*. **D**

Enjoyment: Inevitably conducted minutely for out, notably inquisit. **D**

In Retrospect: Next up, *Liam Gallagher*. **D**



WHITE MATERIAL

RECENT
MOVIES
BY
THE
ACTRESS

WHITE

Marie Vial (Isabelle Huppert), a European coffee planter, refuses to flee to safety as the army prepares to re-establish order in the Cameroonian hinterland. As the sound of gunfire edgier nearer and the population decreases with each passing hour, Marie decides to stay put and protect her plantation and livelihood, re-hiring workers as the threat of a rebel backlash becomes more ominous. *Monsieur*: Miss's family face the dangers of the gathering storm, as her ex-husband (played by Christopher Lambert) attempts to seek protection from the marauding town mayor, while her son has a run-in with two matchless

wielding child soldiers.

Returning for the third time to the place where she grew up, Claire Denis proves that her unmythical convincing sense of place and time is as potent as ever. Despite the glorious photography of Yves Espe, *White Material* refuses to succumb to conventionalist misreadings, instead focusing on a sense of frenetic panic and lingering foreboding.

There are, of course, parallels with Denis' debut feature, *Hors sujet*, throughout – from the narrative structure to the bourgeois expats' exploitation of local labourers – though *White Material* feels like the more pessimistic and cynical outing,

ambiguously in its characters' actions, especially during the first stretch when the proverbial does indeed hit the fan.

The film boasts excellent performances from all involved (though perhaps there are too many supporting characters with too little screen time), but it's essentially Huppert's film. She curries the story with customary ease, always mesmerizing and never short of startling interpretation.

Cooling up more memory and action than we have come to expect from Denis, *White Material* is one of the director's most accessible works to date

yet some may be disappointed by the uncharacteristically conventional execution. But despite the lack of surprises, Denis' philosophical preoccupations persist, making her film an absorbing and wholly relevant social commentary open to much interpretation and debate. **Lee Goffredo**

Anticipation: Claire Denis has yet to put a foot wrong **1**

Enjoyment: Intriguing if a little conventional for the modern viewer **5**

In Retrospect: Another solid entry in the Denis oeuvre **3**

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ROMAIN DURIS: DECEITFUL HEART INTERVIEW BY MATT BOCHENSKI

SELECT FILMOGRAPHY ROMAIN DURIS

Heartbreaker (2010)
Paris (2008)
Molins (2007)
Sex Rule (2006)
Reunion Falls (2005)
The Last Twenty Years Stopped (2003)
Brian (2004)
A French Boy (2002)
Galaxy Express (2002)
40 (2005)
Interview (2007)
Le Petit Prince (2006)

"*Heartbreaker*" Romain Duris is suffering. Perhaps it's karma: payback for stealing his latest role as the rebellious Alex in Pascal Chaumeil's *Heartbreaker* with such irresistible charm that we find ourselves helplessly drawn to this professional low rat.

But no, the source of Duris' misery is more prosaic. Consuming a English without the aid of a translator, he's good but not perfect — and perfection is what Duris demands. Bravely Gallic and broodingly handsome, Duris has a battered appeal, the same suffering soulfulness as Colin Farrell, only lighter on his feet, more effortlessly interesting.

Olivier Klapowtch discovered the 21-year-old Duris in 1994, casting him as the comic lead in *Le Petit Prince*. He worked steadily if sparingly throughout the late '90s and early noughties, cementing his reputation in France alongside Klapowtch, hitting the big time in 2002 with *Unbeige Espagnole*. But he didn't quite cross over into the international mainstream. Not that he tried very hard. Romain Coppola's CD in 2001 and James-boy's *Le Dresseur* in 2003 both flopped, and by the time the third producer came calling for Duris to take the role that eventually went to Mathieu Amalric in *Quantum of Solace*, he'd lost interest in American filmmaking.

Because by that point, he really didn't need it anymore. Duris' career has an apex with Jacques Audiard's genre-defying romantic gangster story *The Bear That My Heart Skipped* in 2005. The actor had found all the filmic art and rebellion he would ever need without hawking himself out to the highest Hollywood bidder.

In France, Duris has had the freedom to express himself as an expansively selecto type. Anybody who first encountered the actor as the brooding Thomas Sjer in Audiard's breakthrough film would have hardly recognized the lit and loquacious Molins two years later; or punch-drunk ex-love Paul in Christophe Honoré's *Dans l'air*; or indeed Alex, the carefree observer of *Heartbreaker*. Gangster, romantic, comic, light or dark, mainstream or indie — Duris has played a lovely independent career path.

If anything like the people he has played, it's the idea of extrovert being broken down, of characters who are themselves actors of a sort, assuming roles and expectations that are gradually peeled away throughout the course of the film to reveal something different — usually tender and unexpected — at their core. Thomas Sey's dreams of becoming a musician, the emotional honesty behind Molins's cynical wit, Alex Lupo's belief in true love.

The actor himself — though still wrestling with his English and his temper — is clear that he has never on the risk of denuding himself as the same way that his characters do. "I never forget what is my life, you know? That's why I don't want to work too much because I know that before a movie and after a movie I need to be me. I need to be," he stresses. "I don't want to hide

behind this world. It's a special word, it's a very strange word. So I need to find the emptiness." Where is that emptiness located? "It's just to feel your life with your habits, in your town, and your friends. How a town somewhere and speak with the people you like. That's it."

Implicit in this is the faith that Duris has in himself to draw a line between life and work. But it's that same faith that makes the work itself so potent. When approaching any role, he says, "The most important thing is to trust, to have faith in your character. For me, it gives me a lot of freedom and inspiration, to feel free to create what I want with my spontaneity, to create in the moment."

For *Heartbreaker* that proved more difficult than usual. As Duris puts it, when it comes to the non-com genre, "There is so much shit. I don't know why. Maybe because the people who are making them are not making them for good reasons." Even with *Heartbreaker*, the original script "wasn't perfect", and required lengthy revisions with Chaumeil and comrade Vanessa Paradis to put it right. "At the beginning I had a lot of doubt," Duris explains. "I was like, 'Wow, what is this movie? What are we talking about?' We had to work out what we wanted to change in the script, and [that took] a lot of discussion with the director and with Vanessa Paradis. We wanted to add not just comedy but more romantic things as well."

The end result was worth the effort — and it's a film that Duris can feel especially close to given that, as a young boy, he was originally inspired by the romantic comedies of Cary Grant, and the easy charm of Jimmy Stewart. Recently, though, Duris was quoted as saying that he never watched mainstream French cinema, only the films of the Nouvelle Vague. As he is embraced ever more warmly by his country's mainstream, is that an opinion that still holds? It's probably more accurate to describe his position these days as gently ambivalent. "There are a lot of producers in France," he says, "sometimes too much. And that could be a bad thing because sometimes it's too much thinking, too closed. Often, the director forgets the audience — they want to shoot their life but they forget we are the audience and we are supposed to be captivated or interested by what is happening. So that's a bad thing about French cinema. Maybe because they want to do the Nouvelle Vague once again."

But he is, finally, an optimist. "I believe in the cinema. I like the way suddenly the cinema can change and can show another way of shooting." And what does he live about movies? "To dream, I think. To be somewhere else, you know? To be in another world. Yes. To feel something and to forget where I am."

Check out the full interview online in the week of release.



HEARTBREAKER

Letters to Juliet, The Back Up Plan, The Runaway Huron, Love Happens, The Ugly Truth ... These are ugly days for rom-com fans. And yet, done well, there are few things in cinema as transfixing, as revealing or as magical as a good romantic-comedy. And here, at last, is something to celebrate. Because French director Pascal Chaumet has delivered a film that possesses both heart and soul: that is honestly conceived and unapologetically executed; that puts its American and English subordinates to shame.

Romain Duris is Alex, a professional "heartbreaker" employed by concubine friends and family members to seduce women in unhappy relationships and give them the strength to move on. He is joined in this morally dubious enterprise by his sister, Millaire (Chloë Perrin), and brother-in-law Marc (François Damiens) who – in a running joke that ought

to be tiresome but somehow isn't – assist him in a variety of unflinching ways, from computer surveillance to acting out roles in elaborately conceived romantic stings.

Alex is a deft and winning act for Duris, one of France's most likable and versatile actors. He is a likeable, brutish, predatory presence with scorching eyes and smoldering charm. He is, of course, irresistible to women, but Alex is both a hollow man and a connoisseur, an arch-manipulator who is nevertheless poignantly susceptible to love. The poetry he speaks may be a sham, but the poetry in his soul is real.

In hook to a love stunk, Alex takes a job that violates rule number one of the heartbreaker code: never destroy a couple who are truly in love. Juliette (Marine Parade) and Jonathan (Andrew Lincoln) are a picture of perfection – young, rich, happy and due to be married in 10 days. Intriguing himself into

Juliette's life as a bodyguard, Alex reluctantly embarks on his toughest assignment to date.

In a simple but brilliant conceit, Chaumet approaches *Heartbreaker* not as a comedy but as a romantic held hostage. It evokes the air of authentic European cine that Steven Soderbergh tried and failed to capture in *Ocean's Twelve*, whirling its bedazzled audience from the streets of Paris to the hills of Monaco where everything is bathed in the golden glow of wealth, health and nectar.

But at the center of all this glowering bewilderance, something real and profound emerges. As Alex lies to Juliette, demanding much by such into his orbit, he begins at last to be truthful to himself. And at this point the film does something subversive with rom-com cliché, as we suddenly find ourselves unable to recognize whose love, exactly, we're supposed to be rooting for.

Dams and Parade are a perfect physical match in this topsy-turvy environment – but severe, ugly, almost aversive looks are competing with his job-lidded, terrible eyes. Around them, the film switches fluidly between romance and comedy, with a series of extremely funny and well-staged set-pieces culminating in a hilarious dance routine set to 'I've Had This 'Time of My Life'.

Heartbreaker may not be a genre game-changer exactly, but it is funny, quirky, smart-minded and under-theorized. Like Alex, it's responsible to watch. **Matt Bochowski**

Anticipation. The French poster is stylish. Look for another inspired one soon. **D**

Biggest win. It's not listed. *Heartbreaker* is original, charming and hugely entertaining. **D**

In Bedrock. Will return your falls deeply in the pain. **D**



GANGSTER'S PARADISE: JERUSALEMA

GRADE

REVIEWED BY
TIM LEE
WRITER
Critic's Pick



UNDERTOW

GRADE

REVIEWED BY
TIM LEE
WRITER
Critic's Pick

Inspired by real events, *Gangster's Paradise: Jerusalem* follows Lucky Kanene (Napoleana Sapienza), a lovely capricious who runs through the streets to become one of Johannesburg's most notorious criminals. South Africa's official Academy Awards submission for 2009 is as enmeshed with the traditional American crime drama as the protagonist is with his idol Al Capone (his other hero being Kati Mero). As mutually recognizable rape is inches tale, *Jerusalem* goes through the motions, taking every box in the genre's memory: Scarface, Goodfellas and a hundred other cautionary tales of the gangster kind are laboriously recalled. Still, despite the familiar ground, Ralph Ziman manages to orchestrate an energetic film full of memorable characters and a killer soundtrack. **Lee Griffiths** **BBB**

The first in what is sure to become Peru's popular gay ghost games, *Undertow* could equally be called *Rosario* and *Hemo* (Decayed). It tells the sad tale of two crossed lovers Miguel, a married fisherman with a pregnant wife, and Santiago, his openly gay lover. Santiago, a painter, is already the source of gossip and suspicion among the loose-lipped villagers, while Miguel lives in fear of their secret being revealed. But what began as a doubleback slash scene takes a turn into the heavy old cliché of tragic realism, as a surprising plot twist on the half-hour mark leaves Miguel with an unusual ethical dilemma. Creepy shot and quietly acted, *Undertow* is a heartfelt drama, but also a bit too well meaning for its own good. **Matt Buchanan** **BBB**



THE MAID

GRADE

REVIEWED BY
TIM LEE
WRITER
Critic's Pick



LONDON RIVER

GRADE

REVIEWED BY
TIM LEE
WRITER
Critic's Pick

This dark comic drama from Chile follows a maid, Raquel (Carolina Sanpedro), who has spent decades in service to the Valdes clan. Feeling that it's part of the family, she soon resents new employees hired to help her and attempts to sabotage each and every one. This is a poignant and often funny examination of class distinction and social awkwardness brought about chiefly through Sanpedro's remarkable performance. Raquel holds our sympathy as slowly a frightened loner is revealed to be beneath the unattractive exterior. The constant use of handheld cameras by director Sebastian Silva gives everything a (semi)stereotypical feel of reality and results in an extremely sharp portrayal of a complex family dynamic. **Lawrence Boyce** **BBB**

Elisabeth (Branda Bierthy) leaves Guernsey for Finsbury Park to search for her daughter in the wake of the July 7 bombings. Here she meets Charmine (Gongga Koyan), an African French Muslim who cannot find her son. Set in the weeks that followed, *London River* is a reminder that in addition to 52 innocent deaths, 700 people were injured in the attacks. And yet the corresponding experiences of these two different parents are overly schematic — chance meetings suggest coincidence, and the sense of a city in crisis, crucial to the film's success, is only fleetingly realized. But for all its limitations, Rachel Roschauer's evocative blending of real-life footage with unforced performance offers a tribute to a terrible day that achieves a kind of quiet nobility. **Tom Seymour** **BBB**



WHATEVER WORKS

COMEDY

WHATEVER WORKS
LARRY DAVID
1999

For the especially mordant love child of two causticulous Hollywood vendors, *Whatever Works* is a disappointingly shaky affair. Larry David plays a grudgingly self-proclaimed genius named Bone, who uses acquaintances with his misanthropy and breaks the fourth wall to offload onto literally anyone listening. But a *Message* runaway named Melody (Toni Rachel Wood) drops a scalding glow of romance and romance all over Bone's misery-addled world when she turns up on his doorstep. While the pair's chaff and choice dynamic has its moments, a stream of multi-bit pointers and incongruous plot developments overcomplicate matters. David might be playing a gag between *Curb* series, but Allen can do better, can't he? **Adam Woodward** **C**



GOOD HAIR

COMEDY

GOOD HAIR
CHRIS ROCK
2002

Like the *Fast Food Nation* of the beauty business, comedian Chris Rock busts open a multi-million dollar business in this hugely entertaining documentary. Gandel chats with musicians (Beyoncé, Ice Cube), academics and everyday New Yorkers reveal a nation's pervasive obsession. Be it burning aphorisms of "creaky crack" (relaxer straightening cream) or debauching 1000s of women (using Rock's hair usually shaved in temples and secretly sold to salons), hair matters. The madman exorcises it in a trade show where hairdressers pump through hoops to impress judges. Rock struggles to keep a straight face as the hopefuls dress hair upside down or underwire to prove their science skills. But all Christopher Guest allusions aside, this is a crucial documentary about race and gender today. **George Hobbs** **B**

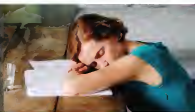


LYMELIFE

COMEDY

LYMELIFE
SCOTT
2000

A coming-of-age story masquerading as a family drama, *Lymelife* is told from the perspective of 15-year-old Scott Bartlett (Rory Culkin). Scott's father, Mickey (Vic Barkham), is a hugely successful, winning a construction company in a small Long Island community, but behind closed doors life isn't so peachy. The lives of the Bartlett clan are intertwined with their neighbors and old friends: the Briggs - Melissa (Cynthia Nixon) works for Mickey, Charlie (Timothy Blaney) struggles to live with Lyme disease and their daughter, Adriana (Emma Roberts), is Scott's long-term crush. Exploring disillusionment with the American dream, dysfunctional families first love, deception and infidelity *Lymelife* is burning with understated comic lines, a convincing cast and tight production. **Leo Owen** **B**



VILLA AMALIA

COMEDY

VILLA AMALIA
ANN
2001

Bonnie Jacques drops us into the flurry of events that make up a year in the life of musician Ann Madden (Juliette Boppert). Superficially, Ann's unraveling from an infidelity by her lover of 15 years but, as the subsequently races from career, home and friendships with military lessons, it's hard to say if she's ever been any different. We're with Ann consistently as she travels a cross France and Germany to the Italian villa of the title, but we deliberately don't get a feel for her. Scenes of high drama and potential revelation are cut short as Ann's air of anxious preoccupation exposes a nature of incomprehension, melancholy and fear in those she meets. We feel those emotions too. They're all you can feel for this character who doesn't seem to want to feel anything at all. **Henry Barnes** **C**

chapter five in which
we discuss the medium
of film in its many
mesmerising forms

THE

BACK SECTION

30



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEAN GULLICH

30 000

THE SPIRIT OF FILM

HOW ONE INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER IS TRYING TO RE-ESTABLISH A FORGOTTEN VODKA EMPIRE IN UKRAINE



When independent filmmaker Dan Hilary was told a family legend – that before his Russian grandfather, Ilya Zerkovskiy, was an exceedingly wealthy Jewish-Ukrainian entrepreneur – an idea began to form. After finding a dusty suitcase in his mom's attic containing a 800-page manuscript of his grandfather's diaries chronicling their flight from Ukraine, the idea firmed into an ambition.



"I got totally obsessed and saw it as a film immediately," reveals Dan. "It was this rage and this story full of romance and war. The manuscript was so full of life and exciting details – battles and glimmering chandeliers and affairs dancing romantic gifts swimming in wax as agghghgh."

Traveling for the first time with his partner Hilary to Ukraine and reading down Ilya's notes, Dan's documentary took another turn. A vodka distillery originally owned by Ilya and probably one of the oldest in Russia, was still open, occasionally producing vodka but unable to sell it, barely grappling up an impoverished Ukrainian village. At that point, Dan's idea became something else entirely.

"The village relies utterly on the factory for its livelihood, but the place is so the edge



of bankruptcy. So I decided what I should do – I thought, 'I'm going to re-establish great grandfather Ilya's vodka empire, and I'm going to import it to the UK and let everyone taste it.' At first I saw my grandfather's story as a narrative film, rather than my exploration of it," he confesses. "But the factory changed that. It was a turning point in our lives."

Exactly how the business will work is still under review but Dan and Hilary have not shied a British distributor for Zerkovskiy

vodka, with proceeds to be donated back to Ukraine. "Belridge have already agreed to stock it."

"The thing for me is that I'm a filmmaker not a businessman," says Dan. "So I had to find a way of making this work in a film." The result, *New To Be: re-established A Vodka Empire*, has been a true passion project, funded through left-field avenues. Two hundred Jewish charities from around the world have reached out to support Hilary's Ukrainian (re)ventures. Artists

swapped free flights to shoot of their stories leading to the final edit. Hilary and Dan have also worked closely with online community Backlog, which has organized behind-the-scenes extras in return for a small amount of funding.

"I'm going to go back to all the men who were editors who refused the funding, and who told me that making the film would be like pushing a boulder up a hill, to see if they'll say that as camera. I'm going to get as many people as

possible who told me not to touch a vodka brand and get those in charge as well, just to create a bit of jeopardy," Dan says.

Dan, Hilary and their workers today have become a custodian of their grandfather's dramatic heritage. On top of the documentary, they're absorbed in the period detail revealed in the manuscript and they're desperate to recreate it. They've even created a green screen in their Hometree studio.

"We are borrowing the elements to act



as a vodka brand using the spirit from the factory, but we're also moving into above episodes based on the manuscript which we're shot here. Obviously we don't have the budget to reconstruct Kiev or the estate as which my great-grandfather lived in some accurate historical way, but what we really are doing is making the folklore out of places in cardboard or the style of Empire Expressions, so we're glorifying whatever we can find of the time and interpreting it in our own way," explains Dan.

Their studio is jam-packed full of lavishly crafted extras of nothing more than cushions and end tables. It's a beautiful sight. Hilary and Dan are seen laughing to a piece of metal of the elsewhere. "I'm going to be playing my great grandfather," says Dan. "And Hilary will be playing Marlene's my grandma, but also my daughter. If you know what I mean. So that should be fun. Just kind of weird."

WORDS BY TOM SEYMOUR



GRASSROOTS

SEE THE FUTURE SALE

INTRODUCING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FILMMAKING TALENT FROM AROUND THE UK.

There's a recurring trend that gets sent to LWFers. It was something like this: 'Yo I'm a filmmaker I'm making my first feature with no money. It's really hard. You should be supporting people like me.'

And you know what? That's right. We should be supporting real, no-budget filmmaking, giving first-time directors the golden ring of the ladder instead of not a ladder at all.

Screenlife is our chance to champion and celebrate the true indie voices out there. These people are prepared to risk everything and beatrude, the ones making time through a simple love of the art.

In 2003 Sebastian Smith headed into the woods with David Bryant and Richard Siles, a small group of writers and a hardcore script. Collaborating equally as director, writers, producers and crew, the two from Napier Film School emerged four years later with *David Wood*, a full-length no-budget horror with a supernatural twist.

After sending a trailer to horror fanzines, Smith, Bryant and Siles were delighted when *Unleashed* picked up their 'four-year labour of love/hate' for distribution in the UK, US, Germany, Mexico and other countries, including Canada and Singapore. It seems that when it comes to teenagers getting backed up in the woods while a mysterious force looms overhead, a limited budget and crew can still produce a successful film of international release.

LWLies

What made you think you could make a feature film?

SMITH

We made a short film, also called *David Wood*, and that did quite well on its thought, 'Let's keep that working relationship and make it all up.' We thought it should take about six months and cost about eight grand. How hard can it be?

LWLies

What was your pitch?

SMITH

It was kind of an accident, really. It's your rather typical horror tale of some teens going into the woods and one by one they meet a mysterious and... The tagline is, 'Four friends. One stranger. No help.'

LWLies

What kind of experience do you have?

SMITH

[Sighs] School wasn't terribly good, to be honest. But because we didn't have to work and the equipment was there, we did a lot of stuff off our own backs, just grabbing camera when available and shooting film.

LWLies

What is your film stand out from the crowd?

SMITH

It doesn't look like it was made for absolutely nothing. It looks like a proper movie. It looks nice, it's quite fun. It's quite a dry, British film. And it's... we need more.

LWLies

Where are you in the present?

SMITH

There are times in where I would've loved to have sold it, like Spain or Australia, but so of over it's mine. And we're moving on, finally!

LWLies

What was the highest?

SMITH

For me, it was actually seeing it in IMAX at Odeon Street. Say! That point, we'd finished it and sold it, but we'd heard tales of people buying films and never actually releasing them. Even now I can get into it in the shops and for me, that's really, really cool. Or in screenings, where people are laughing in the right places, gasping in the right places - that's a real buzz.

LWLies

What about the low?

SMITH

The biggest low was when we first put together the rough cut and it was just appalling. Utterly utterly appalling. We realised we had so much let of work to get it up to show. The second big low is seeing bad reviews. I didn't know how personally I would take it. I get happy from good reviews and pissed off from bad reviews.

LWLies

What advice would you pass on to other independent filmmakers?

SMITH

If you want to make a film, go and make a film. It's your first film, you're going to make mistakes. To me, I'm glad we made these mistakes on a film that didn't cost a lot of money. Just plan, prepare and don't try to do too much in a short space of time. The only thing really holding you back is your determination to go and do it. Make the film that you want to watch - it's great fun. **12400001**





THE

POST-MORTEM

GREEN ZONE

The great Vietnam movies — *The Deer Hunter* (1978), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Platoon* (1986) — only emerged when the national zeitgeist had been given time to mature. Last year, after major combat operations had ended in Iraq (seven years after Bush's announcement), came *The Hurt Locker* and *Green Zone*. The latter was low budget, indie-funded and conceptual. *Green Zone* was the establishment film.

Full of camera work with a studio budget, *Green Zone* was a rushed plea to the American audience in the name of director Paul Greengrass. "We asked them to take one step through the curtain and into more difficult territory because this is a real world, and it's Iraq."

Greengrass, a confirmed liberal who was initially supportive of Tony Blair's stance before becoming deeply disillusioned, went on: "There's a sense of 'Where did it all go wrong?' that emerged in the wake of the events of 2003. Collectively we didn't get it quite right, whatever the issue or the particularities of it, and I think one way or the other we're struggling out of the other side of that."

He had originally intended to make a documentary only later deciding to use the carte blanche by the *Warner Bros.* "The audience that loved the *Warner Bros.* films, there were two important things about them. Firstly, it was that audience that was being asked to fight the war, and it was from that audience people opposed the war."

Mark Damon, who worked closely with Marty Gershman, the US Army Chief Warrant Officer on whom the character of Ray Miller was based, said: "When I first met Marty I asked him, 'Why are you participating in this experience?' What are you getting from it?' Marty said, 'We've lost our moral authority.' That authority went towards the reasons for going in, for invading a country. He was the guy who went into the factories where WMDs were supposed to be and he was saying, 'This is not what they said it was.'"

But *Green Zone* performed poorly in comparison to the other *Warner Bros.* offerings despite being a better film. Officially the production budget was in the region of \$20 million (though someone put it much higher), with at least another \$10 million spent on marketing. Worldwide grosses to date have barely covered its production costs. The imminent DVD release is a final chance to break even, and even that the Iraq War isn't a polarised cinematic choice.

Green Zone is the story of a hero's quest. For all the elements which of Ray Miller, he is the *Green Zone* hero, an appreciation of the war participant — a trope, essentially truth-sucker. But was there a singular defensible truth to be ascertained somewhere within Iraq's conflicting agendas and thickets of events? Or is this, indeed, a less seductive and disruptive in the interests of WMDs?

Green Zone attempts to colonise the Iraq War without falsifying its events. For all the talk of an "invisible audience" its success in negotiating this conflict is a specific question.

What is non-negotiable for Greengrass is profit. *Green Zone* might break even, but in the way studios measure success it was a major disappointment. This was high profile as it gets for politically legitimate cinema. The door has almost sealed, and at some point, Greengrass will have to ask — was the failure a fault of his film, of the film in general, or of the audience to which he placed as much light? **PAUL DUNN**

ARTICLE NOT AVAILABLE IN PRINT EDITION AND NO-REP FORM EDITION

O O O DVD

AVAILABLE JUNE 28

RENDEZVOUS IN PARIS

DIRECTED BY ERIC ROHMER (1985)

Former editor of *Cahiers du Cinéma* and central figure of the *Nouvelle Vague*, the late Eric Rohmer's untimely death is being remembered by a DVD retrospective of his great movie *Rendezvous in Paris*, filmed with no recognizable actors. As an immediate, funny and poetry only the great men of that moment achieved. **B**

SAMMY GOING SOUTH

DIRECTED BY ALEXANDER MACHENIECK (1992)

Based on WH Carraway's seminal novel, *Sammy Going South* is a fictionalized anecdotal voyage told through the eyes of an abandoned child. Using old-hand Alexander Machenick (best for *The Ladykillers* and *Sweet Sweet of Sudan*) showcases the use of the African landscape and accentuates the power of human will. **B**

CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC

DIRECTED BY NANCY WALDER (1997)

This fluffy film wrap '80s glommed from former Broadway star Henry Weller tells the pseudo-biographical story of giddy pleasures during queen The Village People. Not regarded as anything of a cult classic, *Can't Stop The Music* coincided with the first ever Razzie Awards, for which it was nominated in all but one category. It should have been a class wrap. **D**

ANTONIO OAS MORTES

DIRECTED BY GLAUBER ROCHA (1988)

Martin Scorsese has described this film from Cannes' 1988 Best Director winner as a 'masterpiece.' Glauber Rocha's powerful novel is *Black-Out White* (and is now available on DVD). Referring to the Brazilian dictatorship 20 years after Antonio killed Carlos, Antonio is a machine-wielding hitman, hunting against the military regime that hired him. **B**

AVAILABLE JULY 5

THE GARDEN

DIRECTED BY SCOTT HAMILTON KENNEDY (2001)

Bulleheads traverse the 14-acre community garden in South Central Los Angeles (the largest of its kind in the United States) developed as a reaction to the LA riots in 1992. Almost 20 years later, the South Central Farmers have created a fully sustainable community in the midst of a blighted neighborhood. Can they keep their land from a powerful local developer? **B**

THE BEEKEEPER

DIRECTED BY THEODORE ANGELOPOULOS (1999)

This little-known, eerie-but charmed Greek road movie, first released in 1999 by director Theodoros Angelopoulos, follows Marcello Mastroianni's Spyros, a middle-aged man in search of self-discovery, who crafts his beehives along the Greek pollen trail. Languidly paced, largely inscrutable and ethereal with an elusive nobility, a sleep. Intensely evocative within this film. **B**

THE APPLE

DIRECTED BY SIBIRIA RUSSMALINE (1991)

Sandra Bernhard's halved-life tale, clearly about film when she was 17, leaving the crash from her director-father Melvane. An unemployed impoverished man leads his supercilious, kind wife and young twin daughters to his house, the script used to discuss religious faith and liberty. A winner of the Cannes D'Or for young director of German, this is a key film in the Iranian New Wave. **B**

BIKINI GIRLS ON ICE

DIRECTED BY DEBBY KLEIN (1999)

A rising star of its time, *Bikini Girls on Ice* (tagline: "These girls are so hot a nuclear killer can't put them on ice!") has been erroneously acclaimed for its camp take on modern feminist issues. If you missed it in the cinema, and you probably did, said *Bikini Girls* are shamelessly referred to as "The Harem." But don't worry. If you can't get enough, *Bikini Girls on Ice 2* is currently in development. **B**

AVAILABLE JULY 19

THE COLOUR OF LIES

DIRECTED BY CLAUDE CHABROL (1989)

One of the Cannes stars, Chabrol was always on the popular edge of the New Wave. He is also the most prolific of the directors, averaging more than one film a year since 1968. An admirer of Hitchcock (he helped with the famous *Traficant* interview), his love of suspense thrillers is plain to see here. **B**

THE SHOCK DOCTRINE

DIRECTED BY MAT WHITEGLOVE (1999)

A new documentary based on Naomi Klein's new polemic polemic. *The Shock Doctrine* attempts to shed light on connections between western 'disaster capitalism' and the decline of economic stability and civil liberties in the Third World. A kind of Freudian class theory, it focuses on the reigns of Pinochet and Yeltsin, including various excerpts from Klein's lecture circuit. It can give the treatment in the final third, where the doc's weaknesses begin to creep in. **B**

WILD TARGET

DIRECTED BY TIGRE SALVADORI (1992)

Released on DVD to coincide with the 50th birthday in cinema, French director Pierre Salvadori's black comedy stars Jean Rochefort in top form as a middle-aged hitman with no one to inherit the family business. When a pretty young messenger (Colomb Desrivières's son, Guillaume) inadvertently becomes his new protégé, the old man shows signs of softening. **B**

GURU IN SEVEN

DIRECTED BY SHAN S CREMAL (1998)

Made for just \$33,000, *Guru in Seven* is Shan Cremal's modern day take on the MTV generation. Nihil Cremal, where as struggling artist Stanley, where Stanley accepts a challenge to getting laid. When Stanley accepts a challenge to sleep with a new lady every night his girlfriend is away in America. It's got message. **B**

LISTINGS



DONNIE DARKO

DIRECTED BY RICHARD KELLY (2001)

With more sales features than you can shake a stick at, *Frank the Bunny* is back in Blu-ray. Richard Kelly's cult classic, with its *Twins* for *Four* score, pre-blockbuster John Cusack, its indie moments, serious scores of American marketing and elusive meaning (what's the high school representation even after almost 10 years? Kelly, you gave us such hope!)

THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: THEY STAND READY
DIRECTED BY VARIOUS (1946-75)

As part of an ongoing exploration and restoration of British cinema heritage, the BFI are releasing these Central Office of Information-produced warlike-looking documentaries, propaganda films and recruitment films designed to help paint a positive picture of life in the Services. **B**

SECRETS OF NATURE

DIRECTED BY VARIOUS (1922-1932)

First launched in 1922 and now returned by the BFI archive, this series pioneered groundbreaking techniques of slow motion, time-lapse and close-up photography in films exploring the worlds of animal plant and insect life. David Attenborough, best introduced. **B**

AVAILABLE JULY 26

THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN AMERICA

DIRECTED BY JOSHUA GREENE (2008)

Two of America's most renowned liberal dissenters have enabled Daniel Ellsberg to finally tell the story of how he leaked the notorious 'Pentagon Papers' to the US press, exposing the secret history of the Vietnam War. Ellsberg leaked as he here and vilified as he betrays. This is a fascinating account of truth in wartime, with an issue that, for almost everyone, resonates today. **B**

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

DIRECTED BY PETER WEIR (1975)

One of the first Australian films to reach an international audience, Peter Weir's 1975 classic mystery is now released in special edition Blu-ray. With its subversive sexual undertones, reverent cinematography and haunting score, the tale of outsiders seeking into the frontier of untapped nature remains as desirable and disturbingly universal as the day of its release. **B**

SHADOWS OF FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS

DIRECTED BY ISIDORE FINKELSON (1944)

Blacklisted by the Soviets for not meeting the strict social realist style of the time, this 1944 tale of lost love in a traditional Carpathian culture nevertheless received critical acclaim on the West. Shooting deep in the mountains, Soviet-American filmmaker Sarga Finkelson mixes familial realism with folklore, mystery and religious symbolism, while a bold colour palette reflects the changing moods of the characters. **B**

AVAILABLE AUGUST 9

PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

DIRECTED BY ALBERT LEVIN (1951)

An early foray into Technicolor by master cameraman Jack Cardiff, and starring James Mason and Ann Carter, this film has golden-age sparkle. It's also about as untheatrical as cinema gets. Avoiding any talk of gods, it's a surreal love story between an American scientist (Cardiff) and Dutch seafarer (a seriously English Mason). Fantastic! Imaginative, seductive, but never sure to suspend belief. **B**

AVAILABLE AUGUST 29

LOVING MEMORY

DIRECTED BY TONY SCOTT (1988)

That big, brood, sentimental, ultimately American script Tony Scott may just have a softer side. Made when he was just 26-years-old, this is Scott's best feature. Set on the freezing Yorkshire moors near his Northumberland home, it follows the story of a brother and sister living alone with their memories and a motherly secret. Heartwarming and intimate, this is worthwhile for any Scotties. **B**

A ZED & TWO NOUGHTS

DIRECTED BY PETER GREENAWAY (1985)

Peter Greenaway is an early pioneer of the art-film and this is a perfect primer for anybody interested in his ongoing themes, namely sex, obsession and decay. Scored by a young Michael Nyman, *A Zed & Two Noughts*, here released on Blu-ray, is provocative, stylish and funny. **B**

THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL POWELL (1937)

A Blu-ray debut for Michael Powell's first solo film before he made history with *Enoch Powell's* *It's a Wonderful Life*. It's about the editing is all over the shop but the irrepressible experimentation and the daring techniques that would become familiar hallmarks of Powell's enormous career are all present and correct. **B**

THE INNOCENTS

DIRECTED BY JACK CLAYTON (1961)

Jack Clayton's multi-BFI-winning horror, a British pioneer of deep focus cinematography, has been offered a Blu-ray release. Deborah Kerr gives the performance of her career in a film regarded as one of the best psychological thrillers ever laid to print. **B**



MODERN PROBLEMS

1981

DIRECTED BY KEN SHAPIRO

STARRING CHEVY CHASE, PATTI D'ARBANVILLE,
BRIAN DOYLE-MURRAY

BOX NOTABLES THE SUN DAMAGE OF THE SERIALLY
UNRENTED

TAGLINE 'A BROKEN-HEARTED MAN + AMAZING
MOVING POWERS = OUT-OF-CONTROL FUN!'

TRAILERS GATOR!, TRIBE VIBES, THE BIATHLON
KILLERS

CHERRYPICK "ACCORDING TO THESE CHICKEN GUTS,
THERE'S GONNA BE AN AWFULLY BIG RUCKUS HERE
THIS WEEKEND."

Unusually few comedies these days subscribe to the male lead who's hell bent on reaching a level one to kill his before he reaches the event horizon of an insane scenario but he has unleashed within himself an awful chaos rife with potential rage that will unleash the very heart of his deepest fears and expose him to the very marrow of his existence as a being indifferent to human eyes from that of God.

But it is just this late that Chevy Chase is being to avoid in 1981 a central interview offering, *Modern Problems*.

Chase plays Max Finkel, an on-camera car radio commentator with a Studio 54 lip-synch and a bulging portfolio of contemporary activities. When he's not handling his personality to his clients, or blowing through time to satisfy the pleasure, he's attending the rock bands of numerous Delaney Calmness broadcast satellite gains, the Band My and they Thirties, or checking out underground Mark Twain's Colonel Sanders-themed gay rights in New York's up and coming, Max Finkel's Gilded Bash, a night of distinction, however, much an over-the-top hanging scene, near the impact journey that has forced his fiancée into the arms of another man.

Usually, a chance meeting with old college master (Brian Doyle-Murray) — a suburban heterosexual speaking Vaseline with attitude up the ying-yang and the psyche thousand-yard stare of a do-ho post-warrior — gives Max a gentle but much needed shove towards some sort of less chaotic surroundings with his ever-growing, ridiculous, responsibilities. Also, whenever good this comedian produces a worthy answer when Max is faced with random events on his drive home.

It is at this stage in Max's routine evolution from the author's sketches of his birth to a singular duty that the film reveals itself as the first of a number of stylistic transgressions that prove as hard to follow as they are to sleep. Laughing off the 1981's Mark Twain sketch with which he has thus far succeeded himself, we have witnessed the most convincing to find that the present night's stream during has gifted him with his life's power.

Then came evening, in which Max's story line is further a step from the first and all that must have seemed a sensation on the radio aspect, Max is impaled by his own twisted intelligence to attend the gala performance of a ballet being presented by his ex-girlfriend now, Max's fiancée.

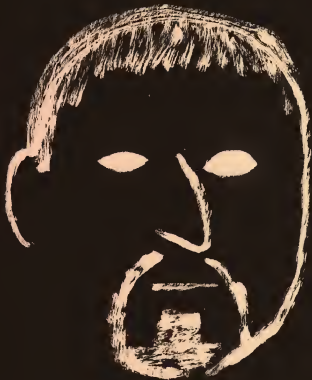
In a scene that will make Brian De Palma blush like an exposed misbehaved on his way to heaven, Max finally releases his momentary power to run his fellow actor's opening night by infusing the present dancer's sexual sack, until it explodes in a mist of pink spray — much to the discomfort of the audience.

It is a thoroughly clear that the Maxes have already taken his mental faculties but Max's longingly out of control of grown-up responsibilities does succeed in making the rest of his living wife and back into his already chaotic. Soon they and the rest of the cast are hysterically dancing to an isolated beach house in the Bahamas to avoid over the next phase of Max's ready response beyond the theatre.

My name machine (Max's machine), otherwise (the name of Max's) and actually early to fall (the name of Max's), this intensely misjudged movie is like a slacker on the west of a roller coaster — slowly disintegrating you but perhaps ultimately understandable for as The Tubes easily put out over the closing credits, "What you got movie problems you don't know whether to laugh or cry."

Top: We know that feeling. **MODERN PROBLEMS**





CULT HERO FRANK THRING



Actors have endless ways to pretend. The best endorse the audience, those less blessed — the hams, hacks and journey-men — have always copied A Thing. They became great acting actors, expounding dialogue through mouthfuls of mashed potato, or uttering life-wrecking thespian put-pouts and snarled-in-blue-ink. For some, like the late Australian legend Frank Thring, it was all about the eyes.

If you think you don't know Frank, you're wrong, at least if you're not disenchanted through *Star-Mar* or turned a Sunday afternoon hangover while *El Gid* gives the infant a bloody great Howling-poodle from your bleated mug. Thring was the guy acting almost entirely from the nose up, a stiff, water-based stage slouching revived only by his burning gaze the villain without whom no tape-hunter or historical epic could do without. For a time in the 50s and 60s, Thring's dual emotional register (Disconcerted rage/defiant perversion) made him a big star.

Thring grew up in the industrial town of Bendigo in Melbourne (the fact that was 1930s Australia, the son of film studio boss Frank Star whom Melbourne set-up was responsible for a string of film accidents and gag-free elegant look-ohs in a room-with-no-show, the privately educated white man was an outsider from the start). His only role as Lucifer in a TV ad betrayed a ready aptitude for camp devilry but it was on the London stage that Thring met his doom-jumped destiny: audience member Kirk Douglas rose so there, sorry, by

Thring's scenery-chewing *Thus Spoke* that he persuaded the Australian to join in his Ealing Court outings for Hollywood, and a career as a villain at hand-to-mouth change.

It was with Douglas that Thring made his great cinema breakthrough: as the scheming, jaded Arie in Richard Fleischer's 1966 *The Vikings*. The part landed all five golden years in which Thring played the scheming, jaded Pentecus White (*Star-Mar*), the scheming, jaded Al Kaddi (*El Gid*) and the scheming, jaded, perverted *Heard* (*Heard*) (*King of Kings*).

By the time MGM was casting *Heard* for their scheduled, nine-day *Jesus* film, Thring had already scored critics with his interpretation of *Heard* in a Melbourne theatre production of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. But the enthusiasm of Hollywood to have his repulse his role as a scene-stealer took two key facts. First, Thring's talent as a stage actor lay in his broad style, which ramped costumes in a role of melodramatic darkness. Second, Australian critics, claiming to have witnessed great theatre in the 1950s, were akin to those medieval cartographers whose depictions of earth's borders were more to entertain than to inform. (Shame who says that reality.) It soon became clear that Thring had no inclination to tone down his style. His standard act was to lounge and preen with hooded eyes and the expression of a lead pitcher before hurling into action, striding across right, eyes wide and flailing, declaiming with tongue-less enunciation his final

dearly business. Hot of eyes, not plot.

Thring could be dismissed as just another second stringer, were it not for clues to a deeper talent. On stage he played opposite Olivier and was cast as Ahab by Orson Welles in the great movie. He'd led *West End Way*, Dick's project. His turn in Tony Richardson's *Red Kelly* in 1970 is coded for cinema and reads beautifully.

And away from the screen, Thring was just as relentlessly expressive: a trait that made him an almost accidental national icon in his native Australia. Here often described as 'larger than life', a euphemism for both bombast and bombast, clubs of which Thring was a widely acknowledged member in the days before the word *Sydney*. 'Mark One' and 'Yellowstone' (a 1982 book's bizarre misnomer). Thring's off-set outburst was 'Bring me another bag, the one has burst' — a statement of excess that leaves 'I'm final' sounding unconvincing.

One Melbourne anecdote of the 1970s recalled a moment that perfectly encapsulated the actor as on and off screen phlegm-cup for living. 'Frank strolled in, all dressed in black, with an incredible amount of jewellery, wrapped-up sunglasses, a bandolier of what I think was scotch and purring freely and murmuring. He looked appalling. Then he tipped over himself and fell into the glass coffee table. Ray tried to bring things back to normal by asking, 'Did you know Chastin Nelson?' Frank replied, 'Where Neil? I was in him!' **THE LONDONER**



THE
ARCHIVE
NO.10

BLADE
RUNNER
(1982)

A distinctive and innovative blend of sci-fi, film noir and pulp fiction, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* initially opened in US cinemas in 1982. Despite offering a stylish, tantalizing link into the future, the film was neither a critical nor commercial success but has, in time and with subsequent re-releases, become a landmark picture in terms of its production design, intelligent and provocative story and chillingly prescient dystopian vision.

Adapted from Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* *Blade Runner* is set in the Los Angeles of 2019, an overcrowded, multi-ethnic metropolis dominated by pollution,

cloud-glazing skyscrapers and towering, rain-soaked, Terry Gilliam-style fountains, a film's environment has rarely seemed so chilling and oppressive.

Possessing human traits such as intelligence, memory and emotion, genetically created Replicants have been developed as slaves and prostitutes to service urbanites in this dangerous, off-kilter science fiction. Aware of their restricted lifespan, life spans, two of these androids escape and travel back to LA to confront their creator, the powerful Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel) about their mortality. Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) – a multi-talented former cop known as

a "Blade Runner" for his ability to "retire" Replicants, is tasked back into active duty to hunt down and liquidate the four replicants before they have a chance to exact revenge upon their human oppressors.

Fostering state-of-the-art visual effects supervised by FX maestro Douglas Trumbull, the futuristic yet cynically contemporary production design of Lawrence G. Paoli, and a pulsating electronic score by Vangelis, *Blade Runner* is a strikingly realized quest for the senses. Scott, completing his second sci-fi project following *Alphaville*, draws the very best from his work with Ford gluing a signature performance

as the ruthless assassin who comes to recognize that there is more to life than death. The film also made a star of Paul Verhoeven, whom Ridley Heuser, as *Play Dirty*, the leader of the Replicant rebels. As the Tyrell Co. president (after the name of a short-lived electronic band) grinds creation, the so-called "bards" that has inspired the engineers, Heuser demonstrates both physical prowess and lyrical eloquence, the final and much needed reeling "here is only speech being, we legend now but it's actually impressed."

Quite apart from its undebating aesthetic (a dissonant influence on Christopher Nolan's recent *Batman* pictures), one of the primary

reasons *Blade Runner* has endured and outgrown an initial cult status is because of its narrative and meditative nature. It weaves upon narratives of time, memory, identity and morality, all encapsulated in Rachel (Sean Young), Tyrell's alluring young assistant who may not be what she seems. The film also analyzes the cost to humanity of technology chosen as a solution.

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of his creation and against the burgeoning fan base, Scott released a Director's Cut version that removed Deckard's cloning, Chronosque narrative and excised an inappropriate happy ending referred by the studio as the result

of wall-to-wall coverage. Added to the film was a short dream sequence that showed Deckard's war against his humanity. In 2007 *Blade Runner* approached its twenty-fifth anniversary, and as Scott returned to the editing suite to deliver *Blade Runner: The Final Cut* his definitive version. Presented with sparkling clarity in a digital format, the re-release was a resounding critical and commercial success and arguably confirmed the film as the masterpiece of an essential and finally brilliant career.

WORDS BY JASON WOOD

THE FRONTLINE



LAWRENCE PEARCE'S DIARIES OF A MOVIE INSIDER

Samuel L. Jackson really does call everyone a "motherfucker." He calls his co-stars, his directors, and every single motherfucking member of the motherfucking crew, set, etc. All with a charismatic flash of that big smile and a glimmer of affection.

On the set of his latest movie, *The Killing Game* (only subject to change), currently shooting right now in Louisiana, he is also calling a very close friend of mine a motherfucker. "I have to say, working with [LBJ] Jackson is a true joy. He has cost motherfuckers so many times over." Karla Walter, who is based in the US as the next big thing, returns in a recent chat.

I have always been a champion of Karla's acting ability and natural talent, and it seems the role of Milla is giving her a lot to showcase her skills with. "My character is great to play: she is cool, nasty and manipulative but has a very vulnerable side to her as well," she reveals. Begging a co-star

into stereotypical Jackson is a fast, dangerous action/thriller with feelings at its core and a healthy sprinkle of sexuality might just be the platform she needs to hit the big time. There will call motherfuckers, she will call.

On this side of the pond, it seems my announcement of taking on indie/film work has been suddenly greeted with some new interest from producers. People always want what they can't have. I guess I've had a few approaches to direct low-budget projects, but without blinking an eye have turned them all down. Not because I have something against low-budgets — even if my favorite films are low indie movies.

It is because I realize in the ability and diversity of the low-budget producer is pretty much at the moment, and I just can't go through the stress again of people promising money they don't have,

and they haven't got access to, short dates they can't stick to, production values they can't meet, and all just to know their ego and self-importance when they hit some trendy State bar or pick up girls. What you end up with is a situation where the director, the film, the actors and everyone involved in the reality of the project is severely let down and disappointingly concluded beyond even the tight budget.

So learn some actual lessons, you fools, don't play the movie game just so you can use the "I'm a film producer" line and don't come to me with projects you know will never happen, for the sole reason of having something to talk about to impress the pretty blond you've just hooked your mind to. Motherfucker.

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AT MARGIN

AUGUST 2010

After an absence of over four years, cult streetwear brand Silas is returning to the UK and will be making their European trade show debut exclusively at the 19th edition of Margin London 1st & 2nd August 2010

OBEY
AT MARGIN

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chapter six in which
we appraise the 2010
Cannes Film Festival



CARANCHO

DIRECTOR: JUAN CARLOS TABARES

Channeling the spirit of *Lost in Translation*, this Dutch film set in Taiwan uses a professional gamer back up with a prostitute and embark on an uncertain friendship both in the flesh and in the online world of *Second Life*. Bored by crime and violence, *R U There* is occasionally strong but seems serious about making any delicate point.

I WISH I KNEW

DIRECTOR: JIA ZHANG

None of Chinese master Jia Zhangke will feel instantly at home to this assemblage of documentary and fiction, where tendrils of memory and history reveal the opaque identity of Shanghai. Once again, Zhang he rejects the tyranny of linearity, working toward a grander picture of historical truth that is intimately and passionately felt.

R U THERE

DIRECTOR: JESSE VAN LEE

Channeling the spirit of *Lost in Translation*, this Dutch film set in Taiwan uses a professional gamer back up with a prostitute and embark on an uncertain friendship both in the flesh and in the online world of *Second Life*. Bored by crime and violence, *R U There* is occasionally strong but seems serious about making any delicate point.

LIFE, ABOVE ALL

DIRECTOR: JEFFREY LEE

A plaintive response to the South African AIDS crisis, Oliver Schreier's *Life, Above All* is narrated by the work of young actress Khomo Mavivela as a girl determined to keep her family and her life together in the face of her mother's illness. Admiringly looking the country's rural medicine - based on juju, herbs and gossip - as a source of the problem, this is stirring, if overthought drama.

UNCLE BOONMEE

DIRECTOR: PHANPHAN THONG

Unpronounceable Thai actor Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Uncle Boonmee* is about a dying old man who goes on a comic journey with his dead wife and a monkey ghost. Right like his previous studies, *Syndrome of a Century* and *Tropical Heat*, it's seductive, mystical and really up for grabs. Watch it, kids.

ANOTHER YEAR

DIRECTOR: MICHAEL LEWIS

British cinema's Mr. Happy, Mike Leigh, looked like he might pick up Cannes' top prize for this slice-of-life ensemble (built out of little moments - comedy, poignancy, nervous, effusive) - and acted by a typically excellent cast led by Lindsay Mendall and Jim Broadbent, it's a bittersweet ode to growing old.

FILM SOCIALISME

DIRECTOR: PHILIPPE GARREL

The master of grace and glitter of Cannes once again paraded with his first film to be submitted in competition at the festival. Wholly missing interpretation through a distinctive absence of subtitles, *Film Socialisme* is Godard's conspicuous slap at an audience that will always remain here for the director he used to be.

SHIT YEAR

DIRECTOR: MICHAEL LEWIS

In the closing *Cave Arden* brought to the festival, the Director's *Shit Year* is a look at the brink of retirement, searching vainly for meaning in her life's work. Shot in black-and-white, clumsily edited and jarringly scored, the end result is a little more than an exercise in film school indulgence. It may impress Archer's friends, but a paying audience is a different matter.

BIUTIFUL

DIRTIER **R** **12** **PG-13**
 A young couple's love story turns tragic when a car accident kills the girl. The movie is a beautiful tragedy.

CERTIFIED COPY

DIRTIER **R** **12** **PG-13**
 An early favorite to win the Palme d'Or, Abbas Kiarostami's sensitive melodrama emerged as a strange, sedate confession. Juliette Binoche is a filmmaker (for better and worse) as a French single mother who takes a first writer (opener) and William Bissett, one up to Binoche, where there's a heart that's hard to buy.

THE CITY BELOW

DIRTIER **R** **12** **PG-13**
 Jay Cinnamon's direction is rooted by an understanding of her anger in the subtle and nuanced take on the economic crisis. An aging leader reduces the role of a younger colleague who is complex in her own manipulation. This is a film of gleaming surfaces, meaningful silence, and allegorical power, which takes a sudden turn into a journey in a dramatic code.

LES AMOURS IMAGINAIRES

DIRTIER **R** **12** **PG-13**
 Nicolas Quilès's *Les Amours Imaginaires* (all of 28 years old) takes the lead in his own film about two teenagers, a boy and a girl, who fall in love with the same curly-haired actress. Squidgy, dazed, gleaming and hip, *Les Amours Imaginaires* is also light and shallow. Dorian will only get better as he matures.



FAIR GAME

DIRTIER **R** **12** **PG-13**
 Back on his game after an ill-fated bid to become the next Jack Bauer, Doug Liman pumps a job of energy into this semi-true story of a covert CIA agent (Nicolas Cage) caught by traitor Sean Penn's tell-all newspaper article. This espionage suspense thriller, past relationship saga, is a thriller nearly without ever catching fire.

OVER YOUR CITIES GRASS WILL GROW

DIRTIER **R** **12** **PG-13**
 Sophie Barthes' documentary captures the work of 65-year-old artist Anselm Kiefer, whose powerful sculptures and paintings form an entire landscape above and below the ground. There's no dialogue until the halfway point, when Kiefer explains their process, industrial, elemental force.

ROUTE IRISH

DIRTIER **R** **12** **PG-13**
 Imagine Paul Haggis in the Valley of the Elms with his laptop and you have *Route Irish*. Looking like a TV movie and hampered by some terrible performances, this soul-sucking drama sees a Scotse re-solder investigating an Irish atrocity that may have led to his friend's death. Dour.

CHONGQING BLUES

DIRTIER **R** **12** **PG-13**
 Mournfully lovely in a shrewdly bleak guise, Beijing Regale director Wang Xiaoshuai's mystery drama sees a father returning from life at sea to discover his son was shot dead after visiting two people in a shopping mall. An absorbing, expertly crafted whodunit that draws real impact from its underplayed performances.



BLUE VALENTINE

PG-13

When it comes to the most beautiful and heartbreaking love story of the decade, *Blue Valentine* is the only one that's not a love story. It's a story about a marriage that falls apart, and it's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman.

COUNTDOWN TO ZERO

PG-13

We're all going to die, we're all going to die, we're all going to die. This is the message of *Countdown to Zero*, a documentary about the lives of the people who are going to die. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman.

THE STRANGE CASE OF ANGELICA

PG-13

It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman.

ANIMAL KINGDOM

PG-13

One of the highlights of the biographical film, *Animal Kingdom*, follows a close-knit criminal family down into a bloody feud with the local cops. Heavy on character as well as thrills, it's a Guy Pearce score again.

KABOOM

PG-13

When it comes to the most beautiful and heartbreaking love story of the decade, *Kaboom* is the only one that's not a love story. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman.

TWO GATES OF SLEEP

PG-13

We're all going to die, we're all going to die, we're all going to die. This is the message of *Two Gates of Sleep*, a documentary about the lives of the people who are going to die. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman.

STONES IN EXILE

PG-13

It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman. It's a story about a man who's not a man, and a woman who's not a woman.

THE HOUSEMAID

PG-13

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"So long, Tube lad, and thanks for all the cakes!"

